DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 229 SO 034 554

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Previte, Mark A., Ed.; Sheehan, James J., Ed. |
| TITLE | The NCSS Presidential Addresses, 1970-2000: Perspectives on the Social Studies. |
| INSTITUTION | ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, Bloomington, IN.; National Council for the Social Studies, Washington, DC. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC. |
| REPORT NO | Vol-2 |
| ISBN | ISBN-0-87986-094-4 |
| PUB DATE | 2002-00-00 |
| NOTE | 410p.; For Volume 1, see ED 460 065. |
| CONTRACT | ED-99-CO-0016 |
| AVAILABLE FROM | National Council for the Social Studies, 8555 Sixteenth Street, Suite 500, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tel: 800-683-0812 (Toll Free); Fax: 301-843-0159; Web site: http://www.socialstudies.org/ publications/bookstore.html. |
| PUB TYPE | Collected Works - General (020) -- ERIC Publications (071) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150) |
| EDRS PRICE | EDRS Price MF01/PC17 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Educational History; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Organizational Communication; *Social Studies; *Speeches |
| IDENTIFIERS | *National Council for the Social Studies |

ABSTRACT

This collection of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) presidential addresses seeks to provide a valuable window to NCSS and the field of social studies from 1970 to 2000. Following "Introduction to the NCSS Presidential Addresses, 1970-2000 (J. J. Sheehan), Volume 2 contains the following addresses: 1970: "Exploring the Meaning of the Social Studies" (S. H. Engle); 1971: "Concerning the Matter of Activism in Social Studies Education" (J. Jarolimek); 1972: "The Choice before Us" (J. Fair); 1973: "Social Studies Education: Dilemma, Divisions, and Directions" (H. L. Dante); 1974: "A Social Studies Manifesto" (S. P. Wronski); 1975: "The Fourth 'R'" (J. T. Claugus); 1976: "A Critical View of the Social Studies Profession" (J. P. Shaver); 1977: "'When I See Mr. Jefferson, I'm Going to Tell Him...'" (H. D. Mehlinger); 1978: "Censorship: Does Anybody Care?" (A. S. Ochoa); 1980: "Where Have All the Heroes Gone?" (T. Clark); 1981: "Renaissance in Social Studies: A Challenge and a Responsibility" (T. Kaltsounis); 1982: "Cultural Democracy, Citizenship Education, and the American Dream" (J. A. Banks); 1983: "Promise and Paradox: Challenges to Global Citizenship" (C. L. Hahn); 1984: "A View from the Classroom" (J. Craven); 1985: "Excellence: A Professional Responsibility" (D. H. Bragaw); 1986: "How Do You Keep the Children Moral after School?" (P. R. Shires); 1987: "Social Studies for the 21st Century" (J. L. Tucker); 1988: "History, Social Sciences, and the Social Studies" (D. O. Schneider); 1989: "The Social Studies: Gateway to Citizen Voice, Vision, and Vitality" (M. A. McFarland); 1990: "Unkept Promises and New Opportunities: Social Studies Education and the New World Order" (C. F. Risinger); 1991: "Whose Voices Will Be Heard? Creating a Vision for the Future" (M. E. McGuire); 1992: "The

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# The NCSS Presidential Addresses, 1970-2000: Perspectives on the Social Studies, Volume 2.

Mark A. Previte, Editor
James J. Sheehan, Editor

National Council for the Social Studies
ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, Bloomington, IN.
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.

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# The NCSS Presidential Addresses, 1970-2000

## Perspectives on the Social Studies

Volume 2

*Edited by Mark A. Previte*
*and James J. Sheehan*

National Council for the Social Studies
and
ERIC Clearinghouse for
Social Studies/Social Science Education
2002

# The NCSS Presidential Addresses, 1970-2000: Perspectives on the Social Studies

*Edited by Mark A. Previte and James J. Sheehan*

Volume II

NCSS

ERIC
Educational Resources Information Center

National Council for the Social Studies
and
ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education
2002

## Ordering Information:

National Council for the Social Studies
8555 Sixteenth Street
Suite 500
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: 301-588-1800
Toll Free Number for Ordering Publications: 800-683-0812
Fax: 301-588-2049

ISBN 0-87986-094-4

This volume was published in 2002 by the National Council for the Social Studies and the ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education at the Social Studies Development Center of Indiana University, Bloomington.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is the leading association of social studies educators in the United States. Founded in 1921, NCSS is dedicated to the promotion of social studies and its role in preparing students for citizen participation in public life. The Council publishes books on important issues affecting social studies education, as well as four periodicals, *Social Education, Theory and Research in Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner,* and *The Social Studies Professional.* NCSS has members in all 50 states, as well as more than 70 countries outside the United States of America.

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) is the education information system sponsored by the National Library of Education and the Office of Educational Research and Improvement within the U.S. Department of Education. The ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education (ERIC/ChESS), one of 16 clearinghouses of the ERIC system, is located at the Social Studies Development Center of Indiana University. The address is: 2805 East Tenth Street, Suite 120, Bloomington, IN 47408. The telephone numbers are 812-855-3838 and 800-266-3815; fax: 812-855-0455; World Wide Web: ericso.indiana.edu

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education under contract number ED-99-CO-0016. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

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# FOREWORD

Although the National Council for the Social Studies was founded in 1921, its journal, *Social Education,* did not appear until January 1937. A primary piece in this nascent periodical was the presidential address presented by R. O. Hughes on November 27, 1936 to the 16th annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies. Thus, the tradition of publishing NCSS presidential addresses in *Social Education* was inaugurated.

These presidential addresses are fascinating keys to the heritage of social studies education in the United States of America. They reflect the trends and issues about the teaching and learning of the social studies in times past. Thus, Mark A. Previte and James J. Sheehan have made a significant contribution to social studies education today by compiling the NCSS presidential addresses and preparing them for publication in a two-volume set. Volume I includes the NCSS presidential addresses from 1936-1969. Volume II includes the NCSS presidential addresses from 1970-2000.

This publication of the NCSS presidential addresses makes these primary sources in social studies education readily accessible to various users, including historians, teachers, students, and interested members of the general public. Readers are likely to be stimulated, enlightened, provoked, and even amused by various parts of this collection of papers, which provide a valuable window to the past of the NCSS and the field of social studies.

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Studies Development Center; and
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# I

# Introduction to the NCSS Presidential Addresses, 1970-2000

*James J. Sheehan*

The presidents of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) have the privilege and honor of delivering addresses during the annual conferences. They provide keynote addresses that are visionary in scope and that essentially reflect the status of the profession and the organization against the backdrop of the times. They also provide honest commentaries, serious observations, candid reflections, and practical recommendations that rally enthusiasm and promote vigor among the membership. This second volume in the two-volume series includes the NCSS presidential addresses from 1970 to 2000.

Shirley H. Engle, in his 1970 presidential address "Exploring the Meaning of the Social Studies," provided a historical overview (from 1913 to 1960s) of the development of the concept "social studies." He discussed the nature of the social studies and elucidated the distinction between social science and social studies. He envisioned that: 1) the social studies will be brought to focus on social questions, problems, and issues, 2) history will be used to probe the backgrounds of persistent social problems, 3) children will be helped to use simple social science research techniques, 4) the systematic study of public and personal values and value systems will be provided, and 5) the school will be made to exemplify a society of intelligent and responsible citizens.

John Jarolimek, in his 1971 presidential address "Concerning the Matter of Activism in Social Studies Education," emphasized the significance of the document *Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines*, published by the NCSS, and its four curriculum components: knowledge, abilities, valuing, and social participation. He stated that through this document the NCSS places the action component in proper perspective; social participation quite clearly means some degree of activism. He emphasized that the place of activism in social studies education is to cherish or preserve those conditions that promote and enhance the humanness of human beings and to broaden the opportunities for such self-fulfillment.

Jean Fair, in her 1972 presidential address "The Choice Before Us," opened with the following statements: "We live in a revolution. Is social studies with it?" She stated that it is uncertain whether social studies is "with it." Therefore, she recommended reformulating directions and institutions by observing the following: 1) social studies educators have to be clear about the meaning of social studies education, 2) social studies educators must recognize that social studies education is for all students, and 3) social studies education, which occurs in social contexts, can hardly be conceived outside of them. Further, she explained the status and characteristics of schools as social institutions. She concluded that social studies educators can make a difference and that the choices before us are those of what to make it, what directions to take, and what reorganizations to form.

Harris L. Dante, in his 1973 presidential address "Social Studies Education: Dilemma, Divisions, and Directions," alluded to the enormous change in social studies education. He reminded us to realize the magnitude of demands being made on social studies teachers, especially the beginning teachers, to recognize the pressures exerted on the profession, and to recognize our own internal shortcomings. His examples illustrate the extensive subject matter in which the social studies teacher needs competency. Relative to the development of the social studies as a discipline, he discussed teacher preparation, research, and curriculum. Of utmost importance are his seven suggestions to strengthen the profession: 1) become more selective in admitting candidates to teacher education in the social studies, 2) move to a five-year curriculum, 3) require students to have a comprehensive background of course work in the social sciences, 4) expect teachers to be scholars trained in the various social sciences, 5) reform and police the profession, 6) urge more cooperation between colleges and the public schools, and 7) take steps to reduce teachers' loads.

Stanley P. Wronski, in his 1974 presidential address "A Social Studies Manifesto," presented a treatise of his view about the social studies. He stated that there is a specter of global catastrophe hovering over the world today. He modified an H. G. Wells quote and stated that human history becomes more and more a race between social studies education and catastrophe. His manifesto addressed issues of integrity, accountability, patriotism, ethnic studies, career education, values, academic freedom, American political and social institutions, and social pollution. He stated that we cannot afford to ignore these issues. He concluded: "Social visionaries—Unite. You have nothing to lose but your hindsight."

Jean Tilford Claugus, in her 1975 presidential address "The Fourth 'R,'" stated that the fourth "R" stands for reality. She indicated that the NCSS must face the following realities: 1) the reality of being a professional organization, 2) the reality of increasing professional visibility, 3) the reality of developing a viable program for citizenship education, 4) the reality of assuming responsibility for the quality of social studies instructional materials, and 5) the reality of organizing for a flexible response.

James P. Shaver, in his 1976 presidential address "A Critical View of the Social Studies Profession," provided a critique of the following: 1) the notion of a social studies profession, 2) citizenship, 3) social studies and the social science disciplines, 4) academic freedom, 5) parents and social studies, and 6) teachers and the curriculum. He discussed, at great length, the faddism in social studies education and concluded that the NCSS has a central role to play in fostering both the examination of perspectives and the conceptualization of rationales for curriculum development and teaching if social studies education is to be a potent contributor to citizenship.

Howard D. Mehlinger, in his 1977 presidential address "When I See Mr. Jefferson, I'm Going To Tell Him. . .," shared a fantasy about an encounter with Thomas Jefferson and speculated on what he would say to him. He pondered three questions: 1) Do Americans still believe in the principles of the Declaration of Independence? 2) What do Americans think about the government? and 3) What is being done to prepare American youth to be responsible adult citizens? Of particular importance was his perspective on the contribution of the social studies to citizenship education (i.e., social studies programs and projects, the NCSS publications on citizenship, work of various committees that bear on citizenship, and others) and what needs to be done to strengthen citizenship education in schools (i.e., the need for conceptual frameworks, for perspectives taking, and for ideals).

Anna S. Ochoa, in her 1978 presidential address "Censorship: Does Anybody Care?," focused on three points: the nature and extent of current censorship, the status of the rights of teachers, and what needs to be done by educators, schools, and the NCSS to curb issues of censorship. Relative to the last point, she recommended that teachers inform themselves about academic freedom and censorship. Also, she advised teachers to see to it that their principals, superintendents or department heads have copies of basic academic freedom publications and information pertinent to censorship. As for school districts, she recommended that school districts conduct a continuing public relations campaign with the community; she also recommended that the NCSS inform the profession, file *amicus* briefs, and do anything else which would help.

The 1979 presidential address is missing.

The 1970s marked a very turbulent period in the history of the United States. This period of rapid change was evident in the NCSS presidential addresses: the speeches called for a reevaluation of social studies as a profession. Specific areas of concern included citizenship education, teacher activism, censorship, educational reform, and teacher preparation.

Todd Clark provided examples of heroic individuals in his 1980 presidential address "Where Have All the Heroes Gone?". He emphasized heroes such as Martin Luther King, Jr., César Chàvez, Rosa Parks, and others who transcended the forces that so often control our destiny. He acknowledged that we have become so preoccupied by the larger forces of our times and our past that we have forgotten to emphasize individuals who influence our society and our world. He suggested that we should illustrate to our students that individuals do count—that the efforts of one person *can* change events.

Theodore Kaltsounis, in his 1981 presidential address "Renaissance in Social Studies: A Challenge and a Responsibility," stated that education is under attack, a view which often leads to a pessimistic mood among educators. He countered this by envisioning a renaissance for the social studies. He stated that the first step towards a renaissance in social studies is a strong realization of and commitment to our mission. He added that if we want to achieve a renaissance, we need to raise the level of sophistication of our profession's membership.

James A. Banks, in his 1982 presidential address "Cultural Democracy, Citizenship Education, and the American Dream," defined cultural democracy as an ideology with the tenet that individuals and groups must have cultural and political freedom in a democratic nation-state. In order to help students to become effective citizens of the American commonwealth, he stated that the school must help students to develop clarified, reflective, and positive identifications and attachments to their cultural communities, their nation-state, and to their global society. In addition to cultural democracy, he discussed citizenship education and the educational implications of cultural, national, and global identifications. He promoted an understanding of diverse cultures, discussed the cultural influences on learning, and advocated helping students to develop self-understanding.

Carole L. Hahn, in her 1983 presidential address "Promise and Paradox: Challenges to Global Citizenship," discussed modern hurdles, such as new technologies and challenges from America's changing position relative to the rest of the world. She posed the question: Do we have the will to readjust industries, to retrain individuals, and to reconceptualize our national identity? She pointed out that the promise is of rebirth and that the paradox is that these may turn out to be the signs of death instead. She discussed the problems with citizenship education, narrow nationalistic content and form of instruction, and she acknowledged the presence of inadequate reform. Therefore, she recommended redefining citizenship education, redesigning social studies, and supporting research. She outlined such actions to be taken as: 1) do much reading about global issues and much reading from the perspectives of people in other nations and cultures, 2) ensure that from kindergarten through adulthood programs develop a global perspective and problem-solving abilities, 3) work for an environment that supports such learning, 4) be eternally vigilant against outside pressures to censor materials and topics, and 5) practice reflective inquiry and a global perspective ourselves.

Jean Craven, in her 1984 presidential address "A View from the Classroom," focused on a local social studies program evaluation from the perspectives of teachers, students, parents, and administrators. She reported both positive and negative findings on the four areas addressed by the evaluation: goals of the program, content and sequencing of courses, methods and materials used in social studies classes, and the effectiveness of the program. She concluded that we must continue to define our field by doing two things: 1) identify and proudly demonstrate examples of successful social studies, and 2) spend as much of our classroom time as possible helping students see how to apply what they are learning.

Donald H. Bragaw, in his 1985 presidential address "Excellence: A Professional Responsibility," acknowledged that social studies as a professional field has lost control over our goals and direction, and that the profession needs to move away from outside interest groups and gain clarity and direction. He added that the NCSS and the professionals it represents must clear-up misunderstandings so we can delineate what the core of social studies is. He pointed out that the NCSS has taken the initiative in the following areas: created a National Commission for the Social Studies to redefine the basic goals of social studies, focused on scope and sequence, highlighted programs of excellence, established a textbook taskforce, planned in-service programs, and restructured the NCSS to better serve its membership.

Paul R. Shires compared moral education in the United States with other countries and cultures in his 1986 presidential address "How Do You Keep the Children Moral After School?". He analyzed the modern philosophical approaches to moral education, the facilitation of cognitive moral development, and the affective arguments about moral development.

Shires concluded that students need help with cognitive moral growth, students need help with affective moral growth, and students need to understand and feel their roots and inspiration in society.

Jan L. Tucker, in his 1987 presidential address "Social Studies for the 21st Century," outlined the achievements of the NCSS: 1) creation of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, 2) focus on the theme of "Social Studies: Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century," 3) planning for the first international social studies meeting, and 4) creation of a task force on recruitment and participation of ethnic minorities. He highlighted four major societal trends and professional issues that will shape the NCSS agenda: 1) the increasing technological, economic, political, and cultural interdependence of the world, 2) the changing demographics and increasing pluralism of our society, 3) the unresolved relationship between history and the social sciences, and the subsequent struggle over the content of social studies, and 4) the special niche and concerns of the social studies teacher within the broader context of the professionalization of teaching. He also discussed global interdependence as the most formidable challenge to social studies in the United States, the nationalization of knowledge, trading states versus territorial states, and the crucial role of the social studies teachers.

Donald O. Schneider, in his 1988 presidential address "History, Social Sciences, and the Social Studies," discussed the contrasting conceptions of social studies and the issues with which social studies educators struggle. In light of these, he also discussed the presence of social studies both inside and outside of school, and the purpose, role, and nature of social studies in the school curriculum (in the content, the instruction, and the textbooks). He concluded by stating that synthesis and integration are what we need, and that the task before us is to establish the criteria and create the basis for a new social studies.

Mary A. McFarland, in her 1989 presidential address "The Social Studies: Gateway to Citizen Voice, Vision, and Vitality," introduced the idea that social studies education is a gateway experience that leads our students to understand how history has handed them the present; moreover, it provides the possibility of strong participatory citizenship. She discussed citizen voice, citizen vision, culture, human interaction and connectedness, the idea of community, and citizen vitality. She concluded by posing a challenge to us as an organization and each of us as individuals to seize the "gateway moment" to review the past, examine the present, and improve the future.

The 1980s presidential addresses varied in focus. Some addresses emphasized specific content such as the importance of global education, or the multi-cultural foundations of the United States, or the interrelationship of history and the social sciences. Other addresses focused on the rationale for social studies education—most often stressing education for effective, participatory citizenship in a democratic nation. These addresses reflected the diversity of issues social studies as a profession faced during the 1980s.

C. Frederick Risinger, in his 1990 presidential address "Unkept Promises and New Opportunities: Social Studies Education and the New World Order," had three goals: 1) he acknowledged the difficult and sometimes divisive efforts to address the topic of curriculum scope and sequence, 2) he stated his view and urged us to consider that the real source of curriculum content must reside in the citizenry of a nation, and 3) he encouraged all of us to redirect our attention and resources to the art of instruction.

Margit E. McGuire, in her 1991 presidential address "Whose Voices Will Be Heard? Creating A Vision for the Future," recounted the systemic societal problems that educators face: poverty, dysfunctional families, inadequate school funding, and other maladies, and predicted a much bleaker outlook beyond 2010. She discussed setting standards for the social studies and pointed out that the content of social studies needs to center around civic efficacy and connections. She also focused on putting more effort into effective instruction with the creation of a committee that focused on teaching and learning. She highlighted the five key themes delineated by this committee: social studies is powerful when it is integrative; social studies is powerful when it is meaningful; social studies is powerful when it is challenging; social studies is powerful when it is active; and social studies is powerful when it is value-based. She concluded by asking us to reaffirm core values.

Charlotte C. Anderson, in her 1992 presidential address "The Context of Civil Competence and Education Five Hundred Years After Columbus," discussed several issues: 1) cultural diversity and global interdependence as dimensions of the human experience and their impact on our civic lives, 2) education for democratic citizenship, 3) competition and choice, 4) multicultural education (where she pointed out that the Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education of the NCSS provide a far superior perspective on the relationship between civic unity and cultural diversity), 5) national standards and social studies standards, 6) a new civic culture that accommodates realities of one global economy encompassing almost two hundred national polities (dividing and linking these nations are thousands of sub-national and transnational cultures), and 7) political courage and altruism. She reminded the social studies profession to reflect the cultural and ethnic plurality of societies—such a diverse professional constituency will more effectively address critical decisions by providing diverse leadership to local, state, and national councils.

Denny Schillings, in his 1993 presidential address "Teaching the Human Condition Through the Social Studies," described his experiences as a full-time teacher in a public high school classroom. He discussed the following: 1) the critical role of teachers (to influence and direct young minds), 2) relevance is key (getting students' attention and using what they already know and care about as perhaps the most effective way to instill knowledge), and 3) achieving our goals through standards (which are to help teachers know what is important, how they can approach teaching so that students will learn those important things, and to provide guidance to assess student progress in attaining them). He concluded by urging the NCSS Standards Task Force to continue the development of standards that are more than lists of nice things, but are usable directives for the classroom.

Robert J. Stahl, in his 1994 presidential address "Meeting the Challenges of Making a Difference in the Classroom: Students' Academic Success is the Difference that Counts," stated that if we are to take our responsibilities as social studies educators to heart, we must make the changes in mind, attitude, beliefs, and practice that are necessary to move students beyond learning within and about the domain of the social studies to being very successful persons and competent participants within the civic community. He offered four sets of ideas: 1) curricular and instructional results and outcomes that make a difference, 2) concepts and principles from cognitive psychology that can make a difference, 3) ideas concerning what students must have in order to be successful that can make a difference, and 4) ideas relevant to instruction that illustrate making a difference.

H. Michael Hartoonian, in his 1995 presidential address "The Price of Civilization: Competence and Constant Vigil," stated that the ultimate work of education is to learn to be a human being. He further explained that humans are always active in reconstructing civilization and reconstructing ourselves. In order to move out of the shadow of warfare, he stated that we must focus on the virtues of reason, compassion, quality, and love that point to new possibilities. In addition, he discussed technology, cold war, consumerism, class, gender, race, and division of territoriality. He concluded that we must move towards a new identity, and that as educators we should be both the new warriors for change and the leaders in the pursuit of wisdom.

The presidential addresses for 1996 and 1997 by Pat Nickell and Richard Diem, respectively, were replaced with small gatherings to discuss issues facing both the NCSS and the social studies in general.

Tedd Levy, in his 1998 presidential address "Toward A Humane World: Making a Difference with Social Studies," stated that to be humane is to recognize the worth of human life. Humane men and women have a vision that cuts across barriers; they have compassion for their fellow human beings, firm beliefs, and the courage to champion a larger cause. In addition, he said that humane men and women are great teachers who inspire the best in human beings. He concluded that our mission is to educate competent, caring human beings for a diverse and democratic society in an interdependent world.

Richard Theisen, in his 1999 presidential address "Social Studies Education: A Challenge, A Choice, A Commitment," challenged us to provide a quality education to help every child reach his/her potential. To improve the quality of social studies, he suggested that we need to make three changes: 1) reinstate summer study programs for young teachers, 2) change the factory style structure of our schools, and 3) restore civility to the dialogue about educational issues. He further stated that social studies teachers are active participants in defining a society's common good. He concluded that teaching traits of citizenship would not alone make it happen; however, practicing it in our classrooms, schools, and communities, is a way of addressing the issue of political efficacy.

Susan Adler, in her 2000 presidential address "Creating Public Spaces in the Social Studies Classroom," focused on the major initiatives of the NCSS and her vision for social studies in the 21st century. In terms of the NCSS initiatives, she highlighted the following: creation of the Governance Task Force, establishing partnerships with Boston Public Television and Annenberg/CPB, creation of the Citizenship Education Task Force, and the public relations campaign. She envisioned building a future in which justice and human compassion triumph over authoritarianism and hate. She reminded us that the core of our work as social studies educators is enabling kids to be citizens in a democratic society. She shared her concern for the shrinking public spaces, especially with the diminished concern for the "common good." She concluded that classrooms should be caring places.

During the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, the NCSS presidential addresses focused on a host of topics such as diversity, standards, citizenship, and the global community. Motivating students to actively participate in society and the call for teachers to provide quality educational experiences were perennial themes.

# II

## NCSS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES:

### 1970-1978, 1980-1995, 1998-2000*

1970, Shirley H. Engle
1971, John Jarolimek
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1987, Jan L. Tucker
1988, Donald O. Schneider
1989, Mary A. McFarland
1990, C. Frederick Risinger
1991, Margit E. McGuire
1992, Charlotte C. Anderson
1993, Denny Schillings
1994, Robert J. Stahl
1995, H. Michael Hartoonian
1998, Tedd Levy
1999, Richard Theisen
2000, Susan Adler

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*NCSS Presidential Addresses are NOT available for the following years: 1979, 1996, and 1997.

# 1970

## EXPLORING THE MEANING OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES

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**This presidential address was presented on November 20, 1970 to the 50th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at New York City. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 35 (March 1971): 280-288, 344. ERIC Number: EJ 035 768.**

# 1970

## Exploring the Meaning of the Social Studies

*Shirley H. Engle*

### Development of the Concept "Social Studies"

The term "Social Studies" has now persisted in our language for over fifty years. It was first used in an official or public sense as the name of a committee, the Committee on Social Studies, which was part of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education appointed by the National Education Association in 1913. This Committee, composed of twenty-one persons, mostly high school teachers and administrators, was chaired by a sociologist, Thomas Jesse Jones, and had as dominant members James Harvey Robinson, a noted historian, and Arthur William Dunn, a specialist on Civic Education in the United States Bureau of Education. The report of the Committee, which was published in 1916 as a Bulletin of the Bureau of Education of the Department of the Interior, set the general direction of Social Studies education from that time to the present day.[1]

The Committee declared that the conscious and constant purpose of the Social Studies is the cultivation of good citizenship. The Committee further declared the good citizen to be one who appreciates the nature and laws of social life, one who has an intelligent and genuine loyalty to high national ideals, one who has a sense of the responsibility of the individual as a member of social groups, one who is characterized by a loyalty and a sense of obligation to his city, state, nation, and to the human race, and one who has the intelligence and the will to participate effectively in the promotion of the social well-being. The Committee defined the Social Studies as all subject matter relating directly to the organization and development of human society and to man as a member of social groups.

The Committee refrained from offering detailed content outlines, and declared that the selection of topics and the organization of subject matter should be determined in each case by immediate needs.

Heavily influenced by the teaching of John Dewey, the Committee opted for the principles of immediacy and utility in the instruction of the citizen over that of the teaching of formal disciplines. Decrying the notion that everything that is taught is learned, they quoted John Dewey as saying:

> We are continually uneasy about the things we adults know, and are afraid the child will never learn them unless they are drilled into him by instruction before he had any intellectual use for them. If we could really believe that attending to the needs of present youth would also provide the best possible guarantee of the learning needed in the future, transformation of educational ideals might soon be accomplished, and other desirable changes would largely take care of themselves.[2]

In this vein, the Committee Report was clearly a manifesto of freedom from the control of college-entrance requirements and college and university scholars over the curriculum of the school. The Social Studies were to be directed to the education of all citizens, and not just to a cultivated elite. The Social Studies were to be especially tailored with the general education of all citizens in mind, and immediate need and utility were to be the guiding principles. The Committee saw that there was more to the education of a citizen than merely the mastery of particular subject matter, and attached little importance to so many hours of this and so many hours of that in the education of citizens. It called upon the social scientists to stop contending over the extent to which each social science discipline was to be included in the curriculum and to unite among themselves to determine how all such subjects could be made to contribute most effectively to the purposes of secondary education.

In the end, however, the Committee proposed a general outline of Social Studies for the secondary schools which has been widely followed to this very day. The cycling of Geography, European History, American History, and Civics in the Junior High School years and the recycling of European (now World) History, American History, and Problems of Democracy in the Senior High School, suggested by the Committee, is all too familiar to most of us.

The high resolve of the Committee to develop new programs in Social Studies that would focus directly on the development of good citizenship fell victim to the traditional belief that knowledge, as derived from the social science disciplines, was the road to good citizenship. Only the most daring departed from the safe haven of history. Thus, the Committee, in effect, fastened on the Social Studies noble and distinctive purposes trapped in the rigidity of the subjects.

In 1899, the American Historical Association issued the first of a series of reports on The Study of History in Schools. Between 1916 and 1926, the American Political Science Association and the American Sociological Society, partly out of fear that their disciplines were being short-changed in the schools, set up committees and issued reports on the teaching of these subjects in the elementary and secondary schools. In 1921, a small group of professors concerned with teacher education founded the National Council for the Social Studies, which became the special "pleader," as it has remained to this day, for the Social Studies in the schools. Finally, in 1929, the American Historical Association established the first interdisciplinary Commission on the Social Studies. Between 1932 and 1941, this Commission published a seventeen-volume report covering a wide range of problems relating to citizenship education and the Social Sciences but skirting the question of the content necessary to attain the objectives of citizenship education. From the scholarly standpoint, the Commission membership was impeccably correct. It included the names of some of the most eminent historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists, geographers, school and university administrators, and educators of that day. Among them towered the figure of Charles A. Beard, who drafted much of the report. A significant result of the Commission's report was the sanctioning, by an eminent group of scholars, of the term "Social Studies." A still more important result was the reiteration of the goal of Social Studies as being that of citizenship education, and the broad definition of this goal as including not only the transmission of the requirements of scholarship but also the comprehension of the social realities of the times and the climate of American ideals.[3] Both the Commission and the earlier Committee understood that there was more to citizenship education than merely the mastery of subjects—history, economics, government, and the like—but it was not clearly understood then or even now what that something else was to be.

## Social Science and Social Studies

The Commission and the earlier Committee visualized the good citizen as having certain desirable attributes. He should look at things with a democratic slant; he should believe in decency and fair play, forbearance and respect for others; he should acquire the customs, traditions, and nationalistic ideals of his country; he should believe in the idea of progressive improvement of society; he should desire to promote the general welfare and be pledged to raise and safeguard standards of living for all; he should believe in universal education; and so forth.[4] These attributes of the good citizen, paraphrased from "A Charter for the Social Sciences," Part I of the Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, clearly raise ethical, moral, and philosophical questions which fall well outside of the scope of the strict Social Sciences. If these are attributes of the good citizen, if Social Studies is supposed to develop such attributes, and if Social Sciences are indeed sciences, then the Social Studies is a broader field than that covered by the Social Sciences. It is more accurate to think of the Social Studies as an applied field which attempts to fuse scientific knowledge with ethical, philosophical, religious, and social considerations which arise in the process of decision-making as practiced by the citizen.

We, of the profession, have not immediately and clearly grasped this distinction between Social Science and Social Studies. We have devoted our major energies, including our efforts in the "new" Social Studies, to making the Social Sciences alone suffice for the broader needs of citizenship education. In this vein, we have tried to organize the teaching of the Social Sciences in all kinds of orders, sequences, and cycles; we have tried to organize teaching around concepts, generalizations, problems, and values; we have tried fusion, integration, and correlation of the social science disciplines; we have tried cases, projects, and contracts as organizing principles; we have prettied up our textbooks with maps, pictures, diagrams, graphs, charts, and a dozen other paraphernalia; we have thrown in audiovisual aids; we have "Brunerized" the subjects and made inquiry our god. These attempts to fit square pegs into round holes have never been entirely successful. It should be apparent that the social science disciplines, by themselves, do not constitute the whole of citizenship education. The effort to force citizenship education into a strict social science mold either does violence to Social Science, asking more of it than it has to offer, or it neglects the ethical component of citizenship altogether.

Because we continue to profess a goal inconsonant with the means we adopt, all efforts to define and give sanction to the term "Social Studies," following those of the Committee and the Commission, have ended in failure. The so-called "new" Social Studies of the '60's, while laudably embracing the principle of inquiry over that of rote memory in teaching the Social Sciences, has largely skirted or ignored the question of the ethical component of citizenship education.

The social studies enterprise has never clearly decided whether it is primarily engaged in describing and explaining the society, which is the concern of the Social Sciences, or whether it is primarily engaged in transmitting and forming the values of citizens, which is the concern of ethics, philosophy, and religion. Since values are so clearly involved in citizenship formation, it is difficult to see how we can continue to turn our backs on the value component of citizenship education. Indeed, if it turns out that both scientific and ethical considerations are essentials for the development of good citizens, then it is high time that the Social Studies turn its attention to the problem of how the realms of science and morality can be made to complement one another.

Nor should we compound our confusion in this matter by ambivalence as to what constitutes good citizenship. Is good citizenship a set of fixed attributes to be transmitted, that is, is the development of good citizenship a matter of prescription and the propagandizing of youth, or is it primarily an intellectual task? Furthermore, if it is an intellectual task, is this task primarily one of mastering subject matter or the acquisition of certain intellectual skills, habits, and dispositions? These are tough questions, which the profession has never clearly answered and which it cannot, in good conscience, continue to avoid.

It may be useful to inquire at this point whether the Social Studies has been used in the past as a propaganda agent or, rather, as the means of developing critical intelligence. As the Commission suggested,[5] we have generously used the Social Studies to advocate a particular view of American life. Our purpose has been to unite and nationalize a people around certain preferred values. Under the guise of teaching history, government, economics, and the like, we have actually taught an incomplete, oversimplistic, and in some respects mythological version of America. In describing American life, we have tended to emphasize national unity over conflict and dissension, a national character over cultural pluralism, general welfare over genuine and irresolvable conflict of interest, freedom and opportunity over the plight of minorities too weak to get a hearing at the bar of history, the inevitability of progress under the free enterprise system over deep-seated ills and problems which beset our society. We have given one simplified version, the correct or official version of affairs, ignoring that the scholars are deeply divided and continually at odds about interpretation of American affairs.[6] Further, we have taught citizenship differently to different social groups, emphasizing obedience and conformity to the underprivileged while emphasizing use of power among the elite.[7]

In contrast to Social Science, we have used Social Studies to advocate public policies that are deemed desirable at a particular time; likewise, the Social Studies have been used to oppose policies deemed undesirable. The Social Studies tended to support war aims during World War I. Current events courses were established to clarify these war aims, which were to make the world safe for democracy, and were thus deemed laudable and necessary. The Social Studies cooperated in the effort to gain support for the League of Nations. The Social Studies tended to support the numerous nationwide efforts during the depression to lift the country back onto the road of economic prosperity. Prior to World War II, the Social Studies responded to the growing threat of Communism and Fascism by stepping up the teaching of democratic principles; later we stepped up our friendly treatment of Russia when she became our ally. As American interests have grown in the Far East and the Middle East, we have increased our treatment of non-Western studies.[8]

To point out these characteristics of Social Studies is not to criticize the enterprise for getting involved in the ethics of individual character and public policy. Intelligent and socially responsible involvement is the ultimate goal of citizenship education. Advocacy and commitment for good reason is to be cultivated rather than avoided. But this is a different role than that of Social Science, which is presumedly value free, seeking to understand, describe, and explain the passing human scene without sitting in judgment on it. To quote Charles A. Beard in *A Charter for the Social Sciences*, "Insofar as social science is truly scientific, it is neutral; as taught in schools it is and must be ethical; it must make choices and emphasize values with reference to commanding standards."[9]

The error is in confusing the two kinds of activity. We confuse analysis and explanation on one hand with advocacy on the other. As a result, we frequently palm off factual descriptions of states of affairs as if they constituted moral judgment. The going state of affairs in economics, or government, or social arrangement is described and accepted unknowingly as the necessary and therefore the good state of affairs. This is a perversion of the use of science to maintain the status quo. By avoiding the ethical questions which could be raised, and by refusing to speculate about future states to which human beings could conceivably aspire, the Social Studies tends to conserve rather than to participate in the reform of society. A social studies enterprise which ignores or glosses over this distinction does a disservice to both science and morality. The most important lesson we can teach our students is to make the distinction between fact and opinion, analysis and advocacy. The Social Studies would do well to recognize, embrace, and emphasize its ethical component, exposing this side of its character to the same critical analysis to which it presumedly exposes the more factual, scientific side.

More clarity and light would be thrown on the relationship between the social studies enterprise and the social science enterprise by asking how they are different than by merely saying that Social Studies is based on the Social Sciences, or that the Social Studies are the Social Sciences simplified for pedagogical purposes.[10] In contrast, it can be demonstrated that the two enterprises are very different but complementary enterprises with different goals, different content, and different methodologies.

The goal of Social Science is the discovery of knowledge describing and explaining human phenomena. Social scientists are engaged, primarily, in the search for new knowledge and the continual re-examination of human affairs from the new knowledge base. The aim of Social Science is to establish general laws of human society which may be used to explain and predict human behavior. Although the search is for orderliness, there is, presently, no agreement among social scientists as to what that order is. Prediction in Social Science is, at best, hazardous. As a result, the Social Sciences embrace many competing theories, each with some support in logic and empirical data but none, as yet, with a sure footing in facts. We have "new" historians and "progressive" historians and "consensus" historians and now "revisionist" historians. Keynesian economic theory replaces or modifies classical economic theory. Interactive geography supersedes geographic determinism. "Behaviorist" political scientists contend with "institutional" and "legalistic" political scientists, etc.

In searching for new knowledge, the social scientist follows any theoretical lead which holds out promise of insight into human affairs. There need not be any immediate, practical use for the knowledge sought. Because of its highly tenuous nature, Social Science tends to divide and proliferate, and new fields of inquiry are continually being developed, each with its own specialists who follow their line of inquiry to great depth. Specialization may even reach the point where an expert in one social science field cannot communicate readily concerning his specialization with an expert in another social science field.

Social Science avoids closure, holds all findings tentatively until a new theoretical and factual assault can be launched against them. Social scientists pride themselves on objectivity, do not engage in advocacy, and view the human scene with an unbiased eye. They may describe values but they do not, as social scientists, engage in valuation.

In contrast to Social Science, the goal of Social Studies is the development of good citizens. The primary concern of Social Studies is the utilization of knowledge. The aim is to improve the process by which citizens use knowledge from the Social Sciences *and other sources* in making decisions concerning their individual behavior, and concerning questions of public policy.

While the Social Sciences deliberately delay closure, the Social Studies must help the citizen to bring public and private questions to some kind of closure. Decisions cannot wait until all the facts are in. Decisions must be made on the basis of the best possible evidence available or determinable at a particular time. The citizen must decide what information is relevant to the problem at hand. He must know how to find the information necessary to the decision. He must be familiar with the common categories under which social scientific and other information is classified. He needs to have mastered some of the less sophisticated tools used by social scientists and others in collecting and organizing information. Possession of facts already discovered by social scientists is, of course, useful to the citizen, but access to the systems by which such facts are stored and organized would be a higher priority. To know all is impossible for citizens, even as it is for scientists.

The social studies enterprise is further distinguished from the social science enterprise by its concern for valuation. Practical decisions always involve valuations. Socially responsible decision-making requires the same care in grounding values as that taken in grounding facts. The values involved in a decision may be tested against facts, that is: Does the consequence claimed for the value actually follow from that value? Values may be compared for consistency with other values and with higher or more general values. In turn, more general values can be investigated for consistency with facts, etc. Social science information and modes of inquiry may be useful in the factual investigation of values, but Social Science does not tell us what to value, nor can it do so. The citizen's act of decision-making requires a synthesis of fact and valuation. With respect to valuation, the citizen is not bound by Social Science, which prides itself on being value free, impartial, objective, descriptive merely of the passing human scene but never sitting in judgment on it. As an individual citizen, the social scientist may behave as any other citizen would behave, albeit more skillfully, synthesizing valuation with facts, but he does so as a citizen and not as a social scientist. As a social scientist, he is neutral, uncommitted to any value save that of complete objectivity.

Further, the problems which citizens face, and the decisions which they must make in real life, are usually global problems and global decisions. Global problems are always complex problems, cutting across subject matter lines, involving both beliefs about fact and beliefs about values. Global problems are never resolved merely by marshaling the facts or within the confines of a single discipline. The facts about pollution in this country are well-known and are becoming more so every day. The hang-up over pollution is basically one of the proper allocation of values. For example, certain of our valuations, such as the belief in individual freedom or the free enterprise system, are on a collision course with other valuations, such as the belief in one's right to live a long and healthful life or the belief in one's right to enjoy and have access to natural beauty. The social and also the biological sciences can help us to narrow and define the value problem but it is conceivable that the individual or the group might choose free enterprise and a shorter life span over regulated enjoyment of long life and natural beauty. It is also possible that some new value which merges the alternatives might be worked out.

The social scientist has never claimed citizenship education as his goal. To quote Pendleton Herring,[11] himself a social scientist, on this matter, "The problem of method in the social sciences . . . is best understood in relation to purpose. The more scientific the bent of the investigator, the less he is concerned with overall social problems or broad dilemmas that invite speculative thinking. His quest is for the concrete, the observable, the measurable, the definable." Herring continues, "The Social Sciences are not the rival, but rather the auxiliary, of moral purpose and of normal judgment!" And again, "Social science research can limit the scope for guessing and for uninformed speculation." And finally, "Social science knowledge can contribute, in some measure, toward the realization of the goals of government or religion or industry, but it cannot function as a rival or a substitute. Should Social Science be conceived in such terms, it would cease to be science, and should social scientists contrive to such ends, they would find themselves becoming politicians, theologians, or entrepreneurs."

Social scientists may claim, as Berelson does in the Introduction to the book, *The Social Studies and the Social Sciences*,[12] that Social Science is the best available knowledge upon which to base citizenship education. Berelson, however, does not make the claim that the Social Sciences are a sufficient or even necessary basis of good citizenship.[13] There are many good citizens and many good politicians who have never formally studied the Social Sciences. Alternative routes to good citizenship do, therefore, exist. We should show more respect for the integrity of Social Science and cease asking of it more than it has to offer.

## The Nature of the Social Studies

If the Social Studies are not merely the Social Sciences simplified for pedagogical purposes, what, then, is the nature of the Social Studies? Perhaps greater clarity can be thrown on this matter by considering the following questions. First, what are we to take as given (or what do we take for granted) in the social studies enterprise? Secondly, what does a citizen do? Thirdly, from what sources does the citizen get the beliefs which he uses in making practical decisions? Fourthly, how is formal education usefully related to the total learning process of the citizen? Lastly, what are the parameters of a necessary and sufficient social studies program?

*What are we to take as given in the social studies enterprise?* There *are* alternatives at this point. We either believe in a method of intelligence, or we do not. If we accept the scientific method and the democratic ideology, which is taken as basic in this analysis, then we must cease demonstrating ambivalence toward intellectualism, now rewarding, then punishing students for intelligent and socially responsible behavior. Unfortunately, Social Studies as frequently taught today bears a closer resemblance to propaganda and fiction than to fact.[14] Schools, as they exist, frequently bear a closer resemblance to autocracies than to democracies.[15] In a climate ambivalent to intellectualism, Social Sciences and scientific methodology are reduced to impotence, and the social studies enterprise becomes utterly chaotic. To say it another way, we are either committed to free inquiry or we are not.

On these axiomatic matters underlying what constitutes the good citizen and how he is nurtured, there should be no equivocation in the profession. These are difficult times which call for resolute and certain action. Student unrest should not be allowed to rattle us into abandoning our belief in intelligence, but should be seized upon as the harbinger of social concern. Crime in the streets, which no one takes lightly, should not blur our vision concerning justice. The drug society, which threatens to engulf us, should be seen not as a cause but as a symptom of serious ills that only deep-going social reform will heal.

*What does the citizen do?* If we take the democratic ideology as given, the citizen is called upon to make myriad decisions, large and small, concerning social goals and the means of their attainment, as well as decisions with respect to his own personal behavior in these matters. He makes these decisions on the basis of his beliefs.

His beliefs are of two kinds. He may have beliefs of how things are, were, or came to be, or he may have beliefs of how they ought to be, or ought to have been. The first kind of belief is a matter of fact (or what citizens think are facts). The second kind of belief is a valuation, the citizen's conception of what is good, best, or what should be. The first of these may be thought of as being descriptive or explanatory of a state of affairs or of what is thought to be a state of affairs, or of how a state of affairs came to be; the second is prescriptive of what ought to be done about a state of affairs.

In reaching his decision, the citizen uses beliefs he feels are relevant to the problem. He is frequently confronted with relevant beliefs that are in conflict. He then, more or less knowingly, works out an accommodation between the conflicting beliefs, assigning to some a lower priority than to others. It is always possible that, were he better informed, a different priority among competing beliefs would be assigned.

*From what sources does the citizen get the beliefs which he uses in making practical decisions?* There is, of course, no way of knowing this precisely, but in today's world it is fairly obvious that the citizen gets the bulk of his beliefs from the world outside and beyond his formal education. Knowledge gained in the home and on the street has a tremendous advantage over formal education in that it is usually immediately relevant to something the learner needs to know and, therefore, is more easily assimilated into the mind. One lesson on the street is worth several lessons in a classroom atmosphere. Beliefs are formed as if by osmosis, that is, they are literally soaked up by the learner from elders, peers, and teachers. Not to be underestimated in this respect is the world of advertisement and entertainment, the theater, television, radio, the music of youth, and the sources of instant news. Beliefs are transmitted by overt behavior, word of mouth, connotation, expressed and unspoken attitudes, and by outright advocacy of those looked upon as exemplars in the society. Business, the home, the church, and the school offer models, which are often accepted without question as prescriptions of how life should be lived. Serious literature, art, and music, as well as religion, vie with the forces of scientific study in the race to capture the minds of our students.

Not to be underestimated among the sources of the citizen's beliefs is his life in the school. The school is the one institution in which all young citizens spend the greatest portion of their waking hours. The general nature and tone of life in the school, the way power is exercised, the way rewards and punishments are allocated, the attitudes displayed toward intelligent behavior both inside and outside the classroom—all of these and a myriad of other matters experienced in school are more powerful in belief formation than are the more abstract and highly verbal experiences constituting the formal content of learning in the classroom.

To the extent that education fosters a kind of rote mediocrity in learning, neglecting to raise really important questions; to the extent that education consists of colorless textbook recitation of what Alfred North Whitehead years ago called inert ideas, ideas merely received into the mind without being utilized, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations; to the extent that the cram, exam, grade system is fastened on the school; to the extent that school officials ignore or violate the civil and human rights of students; to the extent that student government, because of its phoniness, remains contemptible in the eyes of students; to the extent that teachers allow their own right to academic freedom to be restricted—to that extent a credibility gap will exist in the minds of students, which they will resolve by giving a higher value to "this is the way it actually is" over "this is the way they say it is."

A commitment to intelligence and social responsibility requires that the school be an open-ended and free institution where students are treated with respect rather than condescension. There is little hope for the development of intelligence and democratic responsibility in an institution built on a military model or even on that of a benevolent dictatorship.

*How is formal education usefully related to the total learning process of the citizen?* Looking at the sources of the beliefs of citizens, we are faced by the somewhat frightening probability that students learn more outside the classroom than they do inside. Despite our frequent lament about how poorly students master whatever is taught in history, government, geography, etc., it is obvious that these same students do learn much outside the classroom. They master a social system complete with its own history, sociology, economics, and system of values. On a particular day, the student carries in his mind, quite innocently, a complete picture of society which, however inaccurate and limited, nonetheless, in terms of his insights, can be used to explain any situation which he may meet.

Obviously, social systems are not beyond learning by most students. We seem to make our mistake by trying, possibly too energetically, to impose foreign and abstract models on students without making contact with the beliefs they already hold—beliefs they have learned without the strain that is characteristic of formal schooling. Students may come to Social Studies with many erroneous and poorly founded beliefs, but they do not come with empty heads.

While a citizen's beliefs may be impressionistic or, for that matter, merely the idle fictions of his imagination, it *is* possible for the citizen to have thought out his beliefs. He may have compared his conceptions of reality and desirability to those held by others. Or, he may have inquired systematically into his beliefs, grounding them in logical systems of thought and/or facts. From specific beliefs, the individual builds systems of beliefs, theories, and abstract models of behavior. Generalizing, theorizing, and modeling come quite naturally to him. He does it so smoothly, he may not be fully aware of the experiential bases of his models.

To the extent that the citizen has stopped to think about his beliefs, the various systems and sub-systems or models, which each individual carries in his mind, may be consistent one with another. The individual, however, is fully capable of harboring in his mind many inconsistent beliefs about reality, and conflicting beliefs about what is good or what ought to be.

In the light of this analysis, the central stratagem of formal education is confrontation. The structure of learning is most usefully thought of as the system of beliefs, theories, or abstract models in the mind of the learner rather than outside his mind in a body of content. Teaching is manipulation of the environment of the learner so that the existing structure in his mind will be challenged by other structures including, importantly, those provided by the disciplines. We ignore, at our peril, the system of beliefs which the student brings to class about any subject being studied, for this is the most vital structure upon which significant new learning can be built. In this sense, the job of education is to bring the model-making process out into the open where the validity of beliefs can be tested against objectively established facts and values. This clearly is not a matter merely of imparting information to be used later, but rather of utilizing information in testing and modifying one's previously held beliefs. It is at this point that the disciplines become relevant and useful to the student. The grounding of beliefs of a descriptive and explanatory nature is the business of the Social Sciences, the special function of which is to discover the factual relationships in human affairs, past or present. The grounding of beliefs of a prescriptive nature is the business of philosophy and ethics, whose special function is to examine, factually and logically, the grounds for valuation in human affairs, insofar as this is possible.

Formal education is usefully seen as a continuous process through which individuals are helped to correct and extend their present beliefs, and to broaden their perspectives so as to include considerations not presently comprehended; formal education is not a matter merely of filling empty vessels. In this vein, the formal disciplines serve to afford alternative models, better grounded and more accurate ones at that, against which the beliefs of citizens may be compared and contrasted. The models afforded by the disciplines include not only claims to knowledge made by experts but also the conceptual tools and methods of inquiry used by each discipline to validate claims. The utility in the disciplines does not rest so much on their being compendiums of knowledge, but rather that they afford more objective ways of looking at beliefs.

May I turn to my last question? *What are the parameters of a necessary and sufficient social studies program?* Except as a noble purpose recognized and proclaimed by numerous committees and commissions on the social studies over the years, the Social Studies do not, in fact, exist today. The social studies enterprise is captive of the subjects and only a few of the subjects at that. In some ways, the new Social Studies has taken a long step forward, but this enterprise falls far short of the goal in at least three respects. First, the new Social Studies is subject-centered. The number of alternative disciplines offered for inclusion in the curriculum has been increased and the treatment of each has been improved, but the separate disciplines do not constitute a social studies program. Little thought has been given to how all the Social Sciences are to be included in the curriculum, or how a

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selection is to be made among them, or how the separate disciplines are to be related, or how the lot is to be meshed together into a social studies program which contemplates the total and unified education of citizens. In the absence of such thinking, history, and not really history at that, but a kind of oversimplified mythical version of history written from a Western bias, still drives out most of the other Social Sciences. The behavioral Social Sciences, vying among themselves, get only a scant toehold in the social studies door.

Secondly, the new Social Studies, as did the old, continues to ignore or minimize the central position of values and valuation in the life of the citizen. Values are either taken for granted or values may be treated in a shallow and sentimental fashion, out of context with social problems and without any real recourse to the factual undergirding, which the Social Sciences might conceivably supply.

Thirdly, it is well-known that the mastery of social science content, even if done in an enlightened way, as is largely the case with the new Social Studies, cannot be equated directly with good citizenship. If the social science disciplines are to play a part in forming the beliefs of citizens they must be put to practical use by students in defining their real life problems. The probability of such utilization taking place is nil if the Social Sciences are each taught as separate entities removed widely in time from any practical application to the social problems of youth and society.

## The Key Questions

As we confront the problem of what a necessary and sufficient social studies program should be, it is helpful to begin by thinking of the Social Sciences, history, and the like as being instrumental to the large task of citizenship development rather than as subject matter to be learned for its own sake or for some remote and unforeseen future use. Such an approach immediately gets us out of three boxes in which we are presently deeply trapped. In the first place, the question of which Social Sciences to teach and which to leave out of the curriculum would no longer be an appropriate question. Obviously, each of the Social Sciences, in somewhat equal measure, has a contribution to make to the grounding of beliefs. None can be ignored. We thus have to rephrase our question to read: "How can each of the Social Sciences and all of them together be brought in a balanced way to contribute to the refinement of the beliefs of citizens?". This is not an easier question to resolve than the one it replaces, but it is at least the right question to ask if we are to move ahead in the social studies enterprise.

Treating the subjects as instrumental to citizenship development gets us out of a second box, that which equates the Social Studies with the

Social Sciences merely. I have demonstrated earlier the paucity of this view. The appropriate question becomes: "How can the Social Sciences taken together and in concert *with other subjects* be made to contribute in a balanced way to refining the beliefs of citizens?". Thus literature, and the serious arts, religion, philosophy, and ethics come into the social studies door, and Social Science is relieved of carrying the unnatural load it was never intended to carry in the first place but which we have insisted on foisting off on it. This, too, is a big order. It is not an easy question but at least it is the right question to be asking.

Looking upon the subjects as instrumental to citizenship development rather than ends in themselves allows us to escape the third box in which we are entrapped, that of disallowing or ignoring the heterogenous experiences of youth outside the classroom as a bona fide part of the curriculum. We are forced to look at citizenship education as a unitary enterprise. We are reminded that the growing citizen will continue to get most of his beliefs from outside of formal education. We are strongly impelled to admit these out-of-class experiences as being instrumental to our goal. The right question then becomes: "How can we systematically relate outside experiences with the organized work of the classroom?"

## Social Studies in the Future

I do not know what the Social Studies response to these three key questions will look like once it has been developed. I believe it would include, among others, these features.

The Social Studies will be brought to focus continually on social questions, problems, and issues, large and small, which youth articulate or can be helped to articulate. Social and individual problems will provide the linking thread of the curriculum. Consideration of such problems, appropriate to maturity levels, will be continuous throughout the grades. Treatment of problems will not be delayed until the upper grades on the grounds that children do not have the necessary background. Background will be sought as needed. Social science research tools will be used by students in studying social problems. Social problems will be treated in a free and open-ended manner, with full resort to both fact and values. Public closure on such questions will be avoided. Grading of students on their performance in handling such questions will be eliminated. Scholars drawn from several fields, including humanists as well as scientists, will afford models of how disciplined minds attack a global problem. These model discourses will be recorded and distributed to schools for purposes of instructing youth in the intellectual processes involved in global problem-solving.

History, much broader in scope than that which is usually offered in schools today, will be used to probe the backgrounds of persistent social problems and to indicate broad trends and social drift in the context of which social problems can be understood. Or, history will focus on classes of events such as industrialization, urbanization, nationalization, democratization, and the like. Purely local and national history will be offered as electives.

At an early age, children will be helped to use simple social science research techniques, such as the sample survey, to investigate questions arising out of their current life and study. Somewhat later, formal instruction will be offered on the nature of Social Science, including the conceptual schemes used in the various Social Sciences and the inquiry techniques used to collect and verify social science information. Students will be encouraged to use more and more sophisticated conceptual tools and inquiry techniques from the Social Sciences in furthering their own problem-based inquiry. Social Science will be treated separately insofar as this is necessary, but the effort will be made to identify conceptual tools, as, for instance, the "culture concept" and the concept of "social power and its allocation," which are useful in more than one discipline as well as in the resolution of practical problems. Likewise, inquiry techniques, such as the sample survey and the case study, that are useful in more than one discipline or in the general study of society, will be emphasized. Additionally, all of the major social science disciplines will be offered as electives.

To accompany firsthand experience in valuing, growing out of the consideration of individual and social problems, systematic study of public and personal values and value systems will be provided. Provision will be made for the comparative study of value systems. Study will include not only the historical development of values but analytical treatment of values as well. There will also be instruction from ethics and philosophy on the processes by which values are grounded in facts and in comparison to other values. The relation of science to valuing will be emphasized at the same time that children and youth are confronted with value issues in their lives, both inside and outside the classroom. Every effort will be made to help children apply formal instruction in values and valuing, as directly as possible, to the resolution of value conflicts present in their own lives. Systematic study of values will also include analysis of the genuine and spurious use of value exemplars in the society through such media as television, radio, the newspaper, the theater, and other elements of the world of entertainment.

Lastly, the school will be made to exemplify, in every respect, including that of its governance, a society of intelligent and responsible citizens working to improve the life which they are living. The school will be used as a laboratory where students can openly investigate the workings of a human community.

If the Social Studies develop along lines like these, we of the profession will at last be true to our long acclaimed goal, the development of good citizens.

## Notes

1. Bureau of Education, *The Social Studies in Secondary Education*. Bulletin No. 28. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916).

2. Ibid., 11.

3. Charles A. Beard, *A Charter for the Social Sciences in the Schools*. Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, Part I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932).

4. Ibid., 46-81.

5. Ibid.

6. Robert D. Hess, "Political Socialization in the Schools," *Harvard Educational Review* (Summer 1968): 528-535.

7. Edgar Litt, "Civic Education, Community Norms, and Political Indoctrination," *American Sociological Review* (February 1963): 69-75.

8. Erling M. Hunt, "Changing Perspectives in the Social Studies," in *High School Social Studies Perspectives* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962),18-20.

9. Charles A. Beard, op. cit., 94.

10. The shortcomings of this definition, attributed to Edgar B. Wesley and popularized through his textbook, *Teaching Social Studies in the High School*, published by D. C. Heath in 1937, are pointed out by James P. Shaver, "Social Studies: The Need for Redefinition," *Social Education* (November 1967): 588-592, 596.

11. Pendleton Herring, "Toward an Understanding of Man," in Roy Price, ed., *New Viewpoints in the Social Sciences*, 28th Yearbook (Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies, 1958),1-19.

12. Bernard Berelson and others. *The Social Studies and the Social Sciences*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962), 3-19.

13. The inadequacy of the social sciences as a basis for social education is developed by Fred M. Newmann, "Questioning the Place of Social Science Disciplines in Education," *Social Education* (November 1967): 593-596.

14. Alan Westin, "Responding to Rebels with a Cause," in *The School and the Democratic Environment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 65-82.

15. Gerald W. Marker and Howard D. Mehlinger, "School Politics, Rebellion, and Other Youthful Interests," in *The School and the Democratic Environment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 65-82.

# 1971

# CONCERNING THE MATTER OF ACTIVISM IN SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

*John Jarolimek*

John Jarolimek was a professor of education at the University of Washington, Seattle.

This presidential address was presented on November 19, 1971 to the 51st Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Denver, Colorado. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 36 (February 1972): 149-155. ERIC Number: EJ 052 506.

# 1971

## Concerning the Matter of Activism in Social Studies Education

*John Jarolimek*

One of the significant documents published by the National Council for the Social Studies during this past year is the one entitled *Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines*. According to the rationale developed in that title, social studies education consists of four components, these being (1) knowledge, (2) abilities, (3) valuing, and (4) social participation. The section dealing with a basic rationale concludes by saying, "It is essential that these four curriculum components be viewed as equally important; ignoring any of them weakens a social studies program. The relationship among knowledge, abilities, valuing, and social participation is tight and dynamic. Each interacts with the others. Each nourishes the others."[1]

This may seem on the surface to be an idealistic piece of professional rhetoric. However, if this idea is actually implemented in social studies classrooms, it is likely to have a profound effect on the social studies curriculum. Through this document, the National Council is proclaiming that activism in the form of social participation is a legitimate and necessary part of social studies education. From time to time during the past five decades there have been short-lived programs in civics, citizenship, conservation, and others that called for action and active involvement of learners in community action programs. Typically these were innovative or experimental efforts to change curriculum practice, but they never quite became institutionalized as part of the ongoing program of American schools. The *Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines* document, however, says that social studies education to be viable *must* include social participation. This, it seems to me, represents a significant departure from social studies programs of the past.

Social studies education through the years has largely concerned itself with the attainment of goals dealing with knowledge and knowledge-related skills and abilities. Attention to values has, until very recently, been of the most superficial sort. And even in recent years serious attention to values and valuing has not been widespread. The assumption always has been that proper knowledge will lead to proper action. The association of knowledge and action, knowledge and power, truth and goodness runs deep in our thinking. These associations are reinforced a thousand times over in our religious traditions, in our literature, in our history. Little wonder, then, that our educational planning is quite largely based on Francis Bacon's idea that "Knowledge is Power." Or, to cite an earlier source, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." A seventeenth-century English writer, T. W. Palmer, perceived the situation differently. He tells us ". . . mere knowledge is not power: it is only possibility. Action is power: and its highest manifestation is when it is directed by knowledge." Perhaps our thinking about social studies education during the past decade has brought us closer to this latter view of the interaction among knowledge-action-power variables than was the case earlier.

The NCSS statement quite properly places the action component in proper perspective along with knowledge, abilities, and valuing. It does not make the assumption that responsible involvement in social action will emerge spontaneously as a result of knowledge inputs alone. It takes the position that one learns to participate in social affairs by participating in them and that the social studies program must provide opportunities for such social participation. The next task seems to be that of defining precisely what the term "social participation" encompasses and what its limits are. In whatever way social participation is defined, it quite clearly means some degree of activism. The intent of the NCSS statement must be interpreted to mean that the student is to be actively involved in social affairs outside the social studies classroom.

This thrust in social studies education has to be seen as an effort to prepare young people for intelligent involvement in the social affairs of the society of which they are a part. It is obvious that the key to self-government in the democratic tradition is involvement. Democratic processes break down when decisions are made by only a few. Wide involvement is sometimes intentionally discouraged, curtailed, or not even allowed. Involvement can be restricted through the use of such devices as executive sessions, secret hearings conducted by public legislative groups, the seniority system in Congress, by classifying documents as confidential, secret, top secret, and by other procedures familiar to us all—procedures that promote secrecy and decision-making by a select few. Fortunately the people of this nation are not as easily fooled by these deceptions as they once were. There is today a strong movement toward openness at all levels of government, but we have still a long way to go. Perhaps the greatest infringements on involvement of this type occur at the state and local levels, precisely where there should be the greatest amount of openness. At the federal level there is at least a sophisticated press corps at work to help monitor procedures and work toward public disclosure.

Involvement can also be curtailed by lackadaisical or apathetic attitudes of disinterest or indifference by individuals themselves. Voter turnout provides an obvious example. A handful of voters—perhaps as few as 20 percent of the registered voters—makes decisions affecting the entire community. This is a serious deficiency in the democratic process and yet it is one form of social participation in which it is most easy to engage. With the 18-year-old vote now a reality, perhaps the social studies program can contribute to a more responsible reaction from the electorate in exercising the franchise. While it may not be the most dramatic example of activism in which one may participate, it is certainly one of the most important.

Those who advocate more exotic forms of activism or social action are often motivated by some degree of idealism. They look about them and find numerous examples of disparity between what is professed and what is practiced. Through a knowledge of the high ideals of this society as expressed in our historical documents, our literature, and our religious traditions, they may have developed an acute social awareness and a sensitive social conscience. They see themselves surrounded by various forms of social injustice—by racism, by organized crime, by payoffs to the police and public officials, by poverty, by malfunctioning state governments, by antiquated and complicated systems of local governments. They see a federal system consisting of bureaucratic and political subsystems that stifle responsible decision-making in government. They see their nation spending billions of dollars on so-called national defense and on military aid programs, but grudgingly giving only a pittance to the poor and needy of this country. They see prisons in which human beings are deprived of their humanity rather than being made fit to rejoin the human family. They see a society willing to make a multimillionaire out of a publisher of a "girlie" magazine, but which will not provide adequate living facilities for its aged nor adequate education for its young. They also see bumper stickers that say "Love it or leave it!" Recently a serious-minded social critic with whom I was associated lamented, "Love it or leave it—it's awful when you feel you can't do either."

Fortunately there are other alternatives available besides those suggested by the "love it or leave it" philosophy. Whatever the limitations of our system are, its strength lies in providing a built-in mechanism to correct itself, providing enough people care enough to do something about such problems. It is precisely at this point that involvement in social processes becomes critically important. Without activism, without individual and collective social action, without social participation, needed reforms will probably not occur or will come about very slowly. We have little reason to be optimistic that social reforms will occur if we rely solely on the goodwill of our fellowmen to bring them about. It is not a question of the concept of "good will toward men" lacking validity; the problem lies in the fact that it has never been tried on a mass scale. Neither this society nor any other one has really committed itself to this notion. Thus, almost without exception major social reforms have been the result of a tremendous effort on the part of concerned individuals and groups. Women's suffrage, food and drug regulation, recognition of labor unions, hourly wage minimums, workday hourly maximums, child labor legislation, civil rights, desegregation of public accommodations, the one-man-one-vote principle—none of these was achieved without a struggle that took heavy involvement of individuals, often at great personal sacrifice, including in more than just a few cases, the supreme sacrifice. Interestingly enough, our society has benefitted not only by the reforms themselves, but through the process of achieving them. For in every such case citizens are provided the opportunity to test the system to see if it still works and to strengthen their own skills of democratic group action. It is a form of reality testing.

## Means and Ends

While social participation and involvement are essential and necessary in a society based on self-governance, social action must be evaluated both in terms of the means used and the ends sought. There have always been those who were so thoroughly committed to their cause that they convinced themselves and others that any means should be used to achieve what they perceive as desired ends. For example, one may be convinced that living conditions in a farm labor camp are so intolerable that any means can be justified in dealing with the problem—bombing the owner's home, sabotaging the crops, burning the workers' quarters, and so on. While there may be instances where such drastic measures might be understandable, such actions represent dangerous and unacceptable means of achieving goals. They are dangerous mainly because they do violence to democratic processes to which we as a nation are strongly committed. Moreover the perception of a problem by those who are a part of it is likely to be a distorted view of reality. Such attitudes give rise to and justify actions of vigilante groups, the Ku Klux Klan, the SDS Weathermen, the National White Socialist Party, and other extremist groups. Left uncontrolled and unbridled, social action is likely to lead to destructive ends, or at least it will be counter-productive in achieving acceptable societal goals. Social action must be guided by and consistent with humanitarian values. If not, it will in one way or another ultimately lead to violence, treachery, lawlessness, or Ox Bow incidents. In should be noted that the NCSS guidelines posit rational processes and human dignity as overarching values.

In order to provide some safeguards to excesses, activists are often advised to "work within the system." Such advice generally flows from those who are well-ensconced in the Establishment. From the point of view of the activist, working within the system has two serious limitations. First, it is a slow process. It takes a long time to get oneself elected to a public office, to get on the board of directors, or to move up the hierarchy of any organization into a position of power and influence. The second limitation is, of course, that the process itself conditions and shapes the activist so that by the time he is in a position to effect change, he himself has become a part of the Establishment. Moreover, he cannot at this point in time support far-out principles, practices, methods, or ideals because by so doing he risks losing whatever influence and power he has. Thus, if we value fresh approaches, wild ideas, even radical views, we must allow for some social action outside the established and conventional channels for expressing and promoting those views. Some of the most far-reaching proposals for social reform have been generated by splinter political parties in this country. Similarly, activists operating outside conventional and established protocols and courtesies have stirred the conscience of society on numerous issues.

By the nature of things, therefore, activists are bound to come into conflict with certain sectors of the Establishment. It cannot be otherwise. Those who are decision-makers rarely are willing to modify a system that brought them to power. Nor are they likely to be inclined to change a system that will threaten their power. Those who are comfortable and secure are not going to be enthusiastic about reforms that they perceive as jeopardizing their comfort and security.

This being the case, social studies education can prepare young people for social participation by teaching them the skills and subtleties involved in conflict resolution. If we have needed any evidence of our ineptitude at conflict resolution, the decade just behind us has provided a generous number of examples. Prevailing practice in the resolution of differences seems to be based on a power-confrontation theory in which the object is to destroy the opponent. And this is applied as equally to personal face-to-face conflicts as to those that are international in scope. We destroy our opponents with words that are skillfully articulated or shouted loudly, by inflicting a physical beating, by assassinations, by military power, or by destroying adversaries financially through legal procedures. We apply the "balance of power" concept not only to stand-offs in international affairs but within families, in communities, in our schools and colleges. If an objective observer were suddenly brought here from another planet, he would find it incredible that this society, which has made so many remarkable achievements in technology and industry, would be at such a childish level in its ability to resolve conflicts. Had he witnessed recent confrontations between the intellectual elite of this society, that is, college students and college administrators, he would have concluded that we are all insane or at least unbelievably retarded in our development.

Here, then, is an area of genuine challenge for social studies teachers. A whole range of skills and abilities relating to ways of dealing with conflict needs to be taught and learned. How to reduce hostility, how to deal reasonably with unreasonable people, how to become sensitive to the feelings of others, how to develop trust and confidence in human relations, how to deal honestly and frankly with others without causing psychological damage in the process. These are the kinds of skills and abilities that must be the stock-in-trade of social studies teachers and represent learnings that must become a part of a social studies curriculum concerned with social participation.

## Social Participation

The social participation component of the curriculum differs from knowledge, abilities, and valuing components in several important respects. Perhaps the most significant difference is the need for individual commitment when one is involved in social action. In dealing with knowledge, abilities, or valuing, individual commitment is not required. Social action, however, by definition requires commitment if it is to be meaningful. Commitment is not something the teacher can give students. It must come from within the individual himself. Quite clearly, therefore, it seems that the school program cannot require students to become actively involved in any and all social issues. Social participation must come about largely through the initiative of individual students. The teacher's role would seem to fall in the area of helping students define what is possible, in helping them know what the issues are, in helping them inform themselves on the dimensions of the problem, and in helping them understand the possible consequences of specific action they might decide to take.

In thinking about social participation as a part of the school-sponsored social studies program, we need to recognize obvious big differences between such activities and the involvement of an individual citizen in social action outside of school. As a school activity there are necessarily certain restraints on the nature and extent of social participation that would not apply to an adult acting on his own. Moreover, as school-guided social participation, great care will need to be exercised as to positions taken on specific issues. It is not the role of the school, much less that of individual teachers, to define for students what they should think about certain issues nor what position they should support. It seems absolutely essential to separate out those types of social participation that can reasonably be undertaken as a class or school project from those that individuals may wish to become involved in as private citizens.

Another difference between in-school and out-of-school activism has to do with the relationship of each to the legal framework. Individuals acting as private citizens sometimes deliberately violate the law, thereby inviting arrest in order to call attention to something in society that they perceive as needing to be changed. A physician performs abortions, for example, in order to bring attention to abortion legislation. Indians engage in out-of-season fishing in order to protest what they perceive as unfair treaty agreements. Citizens announce publicly that they are breaking various "blue laws" in order to work for their repeal. Protesting groups block streets and highways, clearly in violation of the law. We have seen much of this kind of behavior in recent years—draft-card burning, flag desecration, destruction of draft board records, and so on. Procedures of this type—or any others that are clearly a violation of the law—are outside the bounds of what can be considered legitimate social participation that is sponsored and sanctioned by the school social studies program. The concept of our society being one that conducts its affairs in accordance with laws that citizens help make and citizens freely obey must be respected. This, of course, does not mean that these matters should not be studied and discussed. Young people ought to consider thoughtfully the conditions under which it might be appropriate to violate an existing law—situations in which the choice is between that and another value that may be more highly prized, as for example, where someone's life may be at stake. Laws are, after all, man-made and, therefore, they are not infallible. Nor do laws take into account all contingencies. Even homicide is, under special circumstances, considered justifiable. But these are matters that individuals must determine for themselves. What is being said here is that planned, conscious social participation that involves illegal acts to be performed by pupils and students cannot be a part of the social studies program.

Perhaps the most important arena for social participation lies within the institution of the school itself. This is particularly the case with students at the secondary school level. For several years evidence has been accumulating that the secondary school as an institution is falling far short in addressing itself to the needs of present-day adolescents. In spite of the vast literature on this subject, the secondary school continues to be modeled after an institution designed for the education of college-bound youth. The continued use of the term "prep" school in speaking of the secondary school reinforces this outmoded concept of secondary education. While there are some secondary schools here and there around the country that have effected serious reforms, the general picture is one of an institution that does not promote meaningful educational experiences for many young people between the ages of 13 and 18. It is precisely this set of circumstances that has given rise to the idea of alternative schools.

Up to the present time, school authorities have been able to deal with secondary-school student dissatisfactions with more or less conventional methods of repression—expulsions, failing grades, threats, restrictions, outside monitors, use of police, and so on. Just this fall some 300 students were expelled from a high school in the West because of a violation of the school's dress code. About half of the group was later readmitted when they signed a statement agreeing to compliance. It should be obvious that these repressive strategies cannot continue to be effective in keeping the lid on the secondary school. And even if they were effective, they would be contrary to our hopes for an educational experience for young people that is characterized by meaningfulness and humaneness. For countless thousands of young people in this country the secondary school experience is dreadfully boring, almost totally void of any opportunity to come to grips with issues and problems that even remotely relate to the life of the young person in society.

Part of the difficulty of the secondary school stems from a broader problem in this society of not having a well-defined and productive role for the individual between the ages of 13 and 18. During these ages young people are neither children nor adults. It is during these years that the young person is struggling for independence as a human being, yet the system forces him to be strongly dependent on adults around him, particularly his family and the school. The period of dependence on parents is extended far beyond survival requirements and results in an untold amount of adult-adolescent conflict. The young person is harshly discriminated against by his elders and by authority figures in society. Just to provide one simple example, it is much easier for a young person—especially if he has long hair—to be cited for a traffic violation than it is for a square-type middle-aged man.

The secondary school has tended to reinforce this purposeless role of young people in society. The secondary school is an institution for adults, not for young people. It is organized, managed, and run by and for adults. It keeps young people off the streets, out of the labor market, and close to home base. Undoubtedly this arrangement contributes to the generation of hostility in the young, which leads ultimately to violence. It does not require great wisdom to forecast what is likely to happen to secondary education if appropriate reforms are not instituted, and soon. Indeed, some secondary schools have already experienced student revolts and many faculty members are frank to admit that they are sitting on a fused powder keg. As a matter of fact, student unrest in secondary schools has been much more prevalent than is generally known. News of such activity usually does not go beyond the local community unless it results in a disturbance of extraordinary proportions.

### Power and Student Participation

There are, of course, no easy answers to the complex problems facing secondary schools. Nonetheless, most persons who study this institution are convinced that any reform of secondary education must take into account inputs from the students themselves. No one can really speak for the students except the students. Furthermore, the level of participation of the students must be more than the usual token type such as involving them in student councils, student advisory committees, or other similar Establishment devices. These conventional vehicles for allowing the student voice to be heard are often ineffective because they echo the policies of the school authorities rather than reflect student views. The students selected for these roles are usually ones whose achievements and attitudes precisely fit the expectations of the traditional system. Unfortunately, the students who are not functioning successfully in the system are the ones who most badly need to be heard, but few bother to listen to what they have to say.

Nor would wise policy suggest that the control and operation of the school should be placed entirely in the hands of students. There are many objections to such folly, not the least of which is that it is unrealistic. Even if allowed by local communities, which in any case it probably would not be, there is no reason to believe that the play would be much different with a new and younger set of actors. Most would agree that students lack both the expertise and mature judgment for such responsibilities.

What seems to be needed is some type of coalition between students, faculty, community, and administration that would insure a realignment of the existing power structure in the governance of secondary schools. As matters now stand, power—that is, the capacity and authority to make fundamental decisions regarding school policies—*that* power rests in the hands of the school administration, the School Board and, to a limited extent, the faculty. Students may be involved, but such involvement does not in the slightest provide them with any share in the power of decision-making. They participate—or are involved—at the pleasure of the school authorities. As such they might contribute something useful: at least from the point of view of the school authorities such participation can do no harm. Besides, such a procedure gives the appearance of a concern for student involvement.

The real breakthrough in student participation will come when the power issue is resolved in a way that results in a shared power arrangement including students and faculty. We can be sure there will be tremendous resistance to any effort to provide students with power in decision-making regarding the school. Resistance will come from those who currently hold power—school administrators, School Boards, parents, and even teachers. This in itself is fairly substantial evidence that present student involvement and participation does not amount to much in the total scheme of things. It is only when students really do have power to share in decision-making in such matters as curriculum, requirements for graduation, school organization, evaluation of personnel, budget allocations, that school authorities become threatened. As we noted earlier those with power rarely relinquish it voluntarily; more often than not it must be taken. Unquestionably, the effort to secure more power for students will be a chancy game of high personal and professional risk. It may require legislative action in most states to make the kind of student participation discussed here legal and this will be vigorously resisted. It is an odd paradox that we should have so little confidence in the children we ourselves have been responsible for rearing. But whether we like it or not—whether the school authorities and parents like it or not—it seems that there are not many alternatives available. Either the doors open to student participation in the power structure of the secondary school or the institution will explode. Knowing our inclination to avoid problems until they have reached disastrous proportions, perhaps nothing will be done until the secondary school does, in fact, become totally dysfunctional.

## Responsibilities of Social Studies Teachers

As social studies teachers, however, we do have a responsibility to be creative rather than reactive. We should provide leadership in moving schools toward more meaningful student participation in institutional affairs. No doubt this will have to be achieved in stages. But if we have any claim to expertise in studies that deal with social affairs, we should be willing to provide the secondary schools of the nation with the benefit of our wisdom. Failing that, we can sit idly by quoting platitudes about social participation while our secondary schools come apart at the seams. Here is a challenge of tremendous dimensions which has in it all of the exciting possibilities of applying all that we know about social education. If we do not make it with social participation as applied to the school itself, we just do not make it at all. I therefore urge each of you to make this the subject of your conversations throughout this convention and with your colleagues when you return home. Our theme here in Denver is "Society in Crisis," and nowhere is the crisis closer nor more apparent to us than in the secondary schools of the nation today.

As social studies teachers we have a duty not only to teach young people how our social system works, but also to become thoughtful, informed social critics, to participate in democratic processes, to be involved, to be activists, and to demonstrate a responsible concern for improving the system. And, Lord knows, it does need improving! There is much social injustice; there are many unfortunate and miserable things around us that cry out for correction.

But in working with young people we must also not lose sight of the fact that there is much that is good and right about this great nation. No matter what our dissatisfactions and grievances are with our society and with our country, we can still do something to correct the faults that give rise to them—a precious right that is denied most of the people in the world. If we wish to select a particular life style, we are free to do so with less recrimination than we would experience in most, but not all, other places on earth. If we see poverty and misery around us, we still see less of it than in most other places in the world. If we are discriminated against in America because of our skin color or our religious beliefs, we can be sure that those prejudices prevail to an even greater degree in most, but not all, places. This does not in any sense excuse or justify these inequities here at home. It is to say only that in this great land of ours it is still possible for an individual human being to make many decisions that affect his own life—how he will live it and what he will do with it. He can travel anywhere in the country without permission from anyone; he can check into any hotel in the country without having to report to the local militia or police. The possibilities for individual self-fulfillment are doubtless greater here—in spite of all of the complex problems we have—than they are in most places on earth today. It seems to me that this message, too, needs to get through in a forceful way to the young of this nation.

The place of activism in social studies education is to cherish and preserve those conditions that promote and enhance the humanness of human beings and to broaden the opportunities for such self-fulfillment. These are the kinds of goals and ideals that are worth working and struggling for; these are the ones that make sense out of a lifetime dedication to teaching.

As you move through the various interesting and timely components of the program planned for the next two days, I challenge you to make this a truly outstanding professional experience for yourself. You must not leave here on Saturday afternoon thinking and feeling just as you did when you arrived. What a disappointment it would be if you left this convention without some added knowledge, without some greater feeling of competence, and without some increased dedication to social participation.

In recent years our national leaders have told us over and over again that unless we follow a particular set of recommendations, we will become a "second-rate" world power. On this basis we approve huge expenditures for our space program, we extend the draft, we provide military assistance to some area of the world, we approve military budgets, and so on and on. This threat of "second-bestness" is effective because Americans basically like to be winners. The term "second-rater" is highly pejorative in our competitively-oriented culture. And all the while we have been involved in this international gamesmanship—much of it doubtless necessary—disturbing things have been happening here at home that have disenchanted much of our youth. If we lose the confidence of our young, we have lost our greatest resource of all. The young people today are trying to tell us something. They have a right to be heard. We should listen to them. We must involve them. Activism must be legitimatized through social participation as a part of the school program and particularly the social studies. To paraphrase a line that is familiar to you all, "What does it matter if a nation gain the whole world and loses its own children."

## Notes

1. NCSS Task Force (Gary Manson, Gerald Marker, Anna Ochoa, and Jan Tucker), *Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines* (Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies, 1971), 15.

# 1972

## THE CHOICE BEFORE US

*Jean Fair*

Jean Fair was a professor of education at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

This presidential address was presented on November 17, 1972 to the 52nd Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Boston, Massachusetts. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 37 (April 1973): 292-298. ERIC Number: EJ 075 421.

# 1972

## The Choice Before Us

*Jean Fair*

The theme of this annual meeting makes a statement and asks a question: "We live in a revolution. Is social studies with it?" This is a period of pervasive, even revolutionary, social change. It is uncertain that society, or the institutions of education, or social studies education in particular are "with it."

The enormous growth of knowledge and method in the natural and social sciences and their translation in technology have given rise to a frequently expressed belief that men may now control their own destinies, may make their own futures what they will. I can understand, even at times share, in this vision of man, lord of the earth and beyond. It is a glorious vision, but one that expects more than is likely to be fulfilled in our lifetimes or even those of the young in our schools. It is a vision which for the immediate future can lead to the arrogant assumption of power by a self-appointed elite, or, as utopia fails to appear in short order, to disillusionment and withdrawal, or to the comforting but unwarranted belief that the good life for all will appear as a straight line projection of present trends, that more of the same will result in a qualitative difference and for the better.

Yet neither are people blind and helpless creatures to be buffeted about by circumstance or imprisoned by the forces of unexamined tradition. People may have some influence over their present and their future, may at least shape, if not determine, the course of their lives and the pervasive changes in society.

I am sure that social studies education and the schools will be permeated by these changes. It can not be otherwise. But I am not sure of whether social studies education is "with it." I do not know whether we can summon the practical intelligence, the insight, and the will needed to deal creatively with reality. I am convinced that social studies educators should make the effort to change social education and the schools to further the abilities of all, and especially the young, to influence, if they can not wholly determine, the shape of change. I am convinced that social studies educators should make a conscious, thoughtful, and resolute choice to do so.

Change in our times is not superficial but basic. Moreover, forces which have led to conditions desired by many have also led to conditions undesired by many. The economic system has made the majority increasingly affluent, while the proportion of poor has remained steady. Nor do present trends in the new industrial state assure us that poverty will be eliminated merely through continued economic growth. While many of the newly affluent continue to acquire and presumably enjoy a mass of new products, others have come to realize that material things do not necessarily bring happiness. Those at the bottom end of the economic ladder are less likely to accept the necessity and inevitability of their lot.

Continued growth or even stability in the economic system as it now operates is predicated upon the acceptance of obsolescence—buyers will continue to buy new models of automobiles, military hardware, and products in throw-away packages—and upon the custom of accounting for what are called production costs but not for social costs—what is discarded costs government money to haul away; industrial wastes and detergents pollute our waters; and constant moving onward to outer city and suburban areas leaves the inner cities hardly able to maintain the decencies of everyday living. Present production contributes to the deterioration of the environment, proceeding rapidly enough to justify concern for what can be passed on to succeeding generations and even to present generations.

Moves to the cities or other attractive areas have meant better jobs and more desirable places to live, more stimulating, and less constricted by the narrowness of fixed, provincial worlds, more scenic or without dismal weather. Yet pressure, inconvenience, impersonality, social distance, and the blandness of suburbs have become characteristic of urban life.

Opportunities for better education, jobs with satisfaction or greater income, at least the hope and often the realization of satisfying personal associations and status are now possible for many. Yet merely more of these opportunities do not end the practices of institutionalized racism. Racism continues to deny to Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native American Indians, and many of Oriental extraction the pursuit of happiness open to whites, even the human dignity which all persons prize.

While we hope for a generation of peace, new names to old policies have not extricated us from waste, destruction, and death in Viet Nam, nor ended the country's contradictions in conscience. If the balance of terror has so far averted catastrophe, that system is little more than a modern sword of Damocles and hardly promises a continuation of civilization.

Even the political system, long a source of pride, seems ineffective and unresponsive, often lacking in credibility. Contentment with increases in private wealth means too little for the public sector, which falters in a time of need.

To influence the shape of things does not mean, then, to adjust to or take control of more of the same, and faster. It is not merely running faster on the same old treadmill just to keep in place. To influence the shape of things means choice and shift in directions: reinterpretation of values and new priorities. It means reorganization; it means dislodging people from those spots which have the comfort of familiarity and moving from the known to the unknown. Under such circumstances it is difficult to maintain security, to know who we are, to achieve integrity. Yet there can be no going back to the safe ground, for the ground has shifted and is no longer firm under foot.

If there is change in society, however, there is also continuity. The expectation of dealing with changes is ingrained in American culture; it is possible to build with that expectation. Although perennially threatened, free speech is still a cherished right, and the means of communicating ideas are at hand. The use of knowledge and methods of inquiry is increasingly an integral part of the ways this society functions; if reliance upon the social sciences is shaky, social science by now is for real. This culture has long had a reservoir of organizational know-how and much practice in accommodating divergent interests. The recognition of pluralism, "one out of many," has a long history. The people of this country have combined a belief in a government for the people with a healthy fear of political tyranny. However imperfect in operation, belief in open opportunity is still strong, and under pragmatic necessities in a society characterized by interdependence it is likely to be with us. And love and brotherhood are not values invented by the young. These and more are positive aspects of our society with which it is possible to influence the course of change.

There is some rhythm of challenge and response in social affairs. Underneath apparent calm comes an accumulation of change which in time surfaces. Some clamor early for reform and seem radical. Shouting, frustration, bewilderment, and even violence occur. New proposals are difficult to accept, and indeed the sorting of wheat from chaff is incomplete. Yet accommodation to changed reality is necessary. If ideas of reform and their implementation are shut off, injustice mounts and the social system becomes rigid and stagnant, or unworkable. Although this course may be the outcome in the years ahead, it is not inevitable. Amidst confusion and vacillation, amidst pretense that all is well and not much need be noticed, new ideas and practices come to appear less threatening and more sensible. Reforms are adopted and practices revised. If at times they seem changes broad enough to sweep through every nook and cranny of this country, they are as often less spectacular. New ideas come into practice, they actually happen in concrete and local situations. Which of these courses or some others will follow now is yet uncertain.

### Reformulating Directions

Still, concern and ambiguity are conditions of hope as well as of anxiety and unease. And hope is the base of thoughtful resolve put to action. Social studies educators can not influence the shape of change by expecting to adjust to more of the same nor by lapsing into happy optimism that everything will somehow come out in the wash. Instead we must choose to reformulate directions and institutions. Because of the nature of the social studies field we must do so with thought for the relation of society at large to education in our classrooms and to the institutions of schools.

- *First, then, social studies educators have to be clear about the meaning of social studies education itself.* It is all too easy to step right up with the crowd for our bottle of the patent medicine which cures all ills. (And parenthetically in this crowd will be educators in all sorts of fields and a substantial proportion of the public as well.) The rush for the cure-all moves on from endorsing the disciplines of the social sciences and history to intensely personalized and individually structured-search as the backbone of social studies education. Cognitive learning has its day to be succeeded by the affective. Enrichment programs for the academically talented, programmed learning, television, team teaching, continuous progress, and performance objectives, one after the other have their popularity.

Much of the base of social studies education was formulated forty years or more ago. It is not to downgrade today's theory and practice to point to the sluggishness with which improved social studies education comes into being, sluggishness accounted for in part by failure to keep clear on the nature of social studies education and to see it as a whole.

A year ago the National Council for the Social Studies published a set of *Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines,* pointing to four aspects of social studies education: (a) knowledge, especially the concepts and generalizations from a broad range of fields which have power for interpreting the real social world; (b) abilities, especially in thinking but also in all those skills necessary for finding evidence including reading, and in human relations; (c) the process of valuing; and (d) the use of all of these in social participation. While it may be advantageous to explore the meaning of any one of these aspects or even some part thereof, pushing one out of context with the others means spinning our wheels without forward movement. Each of these four aspects nourishes the others. They are integrally related.

- *Second, social studies education is for all students.* It is not to be crowded out by emphasis on reading, although all young people are entitled to learn to read well, or by emphasis on vocational career education, or by any other field of popularity. Nor should social education be starved out by inadequate instructional materials, incompetent teachers and administrators, or the deadening pattern of dreary recitation of discrete and so meaningless facts. All students—and I do mean all, not just those who are affluent, or intellectually able, or white, or interested enough to elect it, or successful at whatever schools have conventionally defined as important—all students are entitled to opportunities in social education. This is not to say that there is to be one, same program in any one school for all students. It is to say that all students are entitled to the knowledge which makes the social world more nearly manageable, to experiences which foster their abilities to think for themselves and to form decent human relations, to clarify their own values, and to translate all of these into action inside and outside of school as participating members of society.

- *Third, social studies education occurs in social contexts and can hardly be conceived outside of them.* Coming to understand, for example, that cultural patterns in other areas of the world are not like those in America; or that sub-cultural patterns in this country, indeed among those in one's own classroom, are not those already taken for granted as right; or that one's very own values are to be faced and examined means challenge and perhaps threat. Students need support to accept themselves and to accord respect to others. Freedom to inquire depends not only on whether teachers promote it, but whether fellow students give a hearing, without pressure for conforming to accepted stances. Classroom climate must be encouraging and open.

Parent and community understanding are part of the social context. More parents might endorse classroom activities fostering conceptualization rather than accumulation of information, for example, if opportunities were there to see the merits of the former. More parents might feel more comfortable if they could see that students were as individuals to decide for themselves and that no one right answer was in actuality foisted off on all. More parents might rest assured if their children reported social studies as something really good.

Teachers and administrators, in turn, must listen with attention to what parents and others in the community want for their children, to what seems out of kilter or in. Social studies classrooms are not always as they ought to be. The dangers of separation from the social world around are all too real. Communication, frequent, open, and honest discussion, fosters the search for mutual trust.

Yet in a time when change comes too fast for some, when many see only dimly or can not agree on what they want from schools, real education in social studies is disturbing. The public's hackles rise and teachers are pressured to stick to what seems safe. It is then that social studies teachers and other educators must support each other. It is not that they can stick to the line that teachers and schools are always right; they are not. Much of the turmoil in schools comes from plain fact that they are not. Social studies teachers especially need to think their way through these conflict situations. What must be supported through organized effort is the principle of freedom to teach and learn and the endeavors of colleagues and students who act on that principle.

Social studies education which aims honestly at developing capabilities for influencing the shape of change can not be conceived fully as formal curriculum. Students learn from what may be called informal curriculum, the ways things go day-to-day in our classrooms and schools. If knowledge is actually important, then ideas and evidence have to be put to use in the everyday situations of our classrooms. If it is a right and responsibility to inquire, to learn to think for oneself, then social studies classrooms must be open to all kinds of matters. If knowledge and thought and valuing are to be taken seriously, along with hope for the world around us, then young people in our classrooms must expect to grapple with racism, the troubles of our cities, war and peace, poverty, the deterioration of the environment, and the face-to-face difficulties in personal relations. If participation is to be taken seriously, then getting in the act must be possible and practical.

If social studies education is to be for all students, there must be decent opportunities for all to learn with reasonable satisfaction and success. The life ways of minority group young people must be as acceptable in classrooms as those of whites. What is open must be for boys and girls. Especially in social studies classrooms are all students to be treated with the dignity and respect without which any social education becomes meaningless.

Students must have a chance to live by the ways they learn about. If social studies education were like this, schools would be different places.

But if schools were different places, social studies educators could more likely do these things.

## Schools as Social Institutions

Effort in the improvement of education has ordinarily focused more on individuals than on schools as institutions. Pre-certification programs in colleges and universities including their cooperating classroom teachers; special institutes funded by government and curriculum development projects; in-service education in school systems or graduate university programs; articles published for teachers and administrators in books and magazines; clinics, demonstrations, and discussions at national, regional, and state social studies meetings and those of other professional associations all aim to improve individual competence. Curriculum programs state objectives in terms of what individual students are to achieve. These illustrations are familiar to all. The assumption that more competent individuals make for better education in social studies is, of course, quite proper. In the end, it is individuals who learn, individuals who act, individuals who live out their lives with varying degrees of fulfillment. Individual teachers, individual students, administrators, and parents can make a difference. Individual social studies educators—many here at this meeting—give time, energy, and thought to doing what each can do. What they do does matter.

Yet schools are not simply collections of individuals; they are social institutions. They have a role in society; they are also small societies in themselves. Schools have means of social control, norms, procedures, roles, ways of apportioning ascribed status and achieved status, and all the other trappings of social institutions. I do not intend to suggest that the institutional press is identical from school to school, although in broad outline there is more commonality than is ordinarily noticed. I do intend to suggest that institutional press, how things regularly go in each school, exerts a powerful influence on the opportunities open for improving social studies education and on the very roles social studies educators assume in promoting desirable change. If social studies education is to be "with it" in an era of pervasive change, social studies educators must join with others in thoughtful, resolute choice to get about not only the improvement of individual social competencies but the reorganization of schools as social units.

## Rewards for Achievement

One aspect of school life is the focus on individuals, even when they are dealt with impersonally. Achievement in schools is held to be an individual affair, and rewards for achievement in the form of marks go to individuals not groups. Individuals are expected to do something called "their own work," rather than the work of some group (even though at times they work in groups). Teachers also are to do "their own work" (although team teaching is beginning to change that pattern). Teachers too get individual ratings, although after the first few years these matter less.

What would happen in social studies education if students were rewarded at least some of the time as groups? In many schools it is still a big thing to be on the football or basketball team. What would happen if groups of students were rewarded—and with the coin of the school realm, marks, if these are to be awarded for individual achievement, although I prefer other rewards for group undertakings: collecting paper for reprocessing; cleaning up a local vacant lot; running a weekly recreation night in a local hospital for the emotionally ill; keeping track of instructional materials in use in the classroom? Would the problems of group interaction become sufficiently live to be dealt with seriously? Would the requirements of common endeavor foster the examination of new kinds of social controls?

## Patterns of Association

Everybody knows that students and teachers spend their school days with others. Solitude and privacy are sparse indeed in school. Students and teachers are ordinarily assigned to classes, and hence their associates during much of the school day. Assignments of associates are largely made by chance: the number of eight-year-olds who show up for third grade or of high school students who must take U.S. History. Friendship groups; personally chosen, boy and girl pairs; ethnic groups; and the school social class structure reflecting, but not identical with, that of the school community, also exist, almost independently of the pattern of assigned associates. Moreover, students are customarily segregated by age: eleven-year-olds are in the sixth grade—it is a disgrace to be "behind" and a social hazard to be "ahead"—fifteen-year-olds in the tenth grade or sophomores in high school; even college seniors have little to do with freshmen. Teachers knew, long before researchers confirmed it, that peer groups have enormous influence on what goes on in school. Peer groups and social structures are social phenomena and should be dealt with in social studies education.

In place of reliance on circumstance, fortuitous or otherwise, schools might give some thought to making more out of the patterns of association. Special interest groups might allow children of different ages and adults, and those of various ethnic groups as well, to meet on common ground and school time, be it for music or museum trips, or neighborhood projects. Older students might be expected at times to look after those younger: refereeing baseball games, tutoring, pitching in at day-care centers. School might set up some conference days, attendance voluntary, specifically aim-ing to see that sets of students heard each other—Chicanos and whites, for example, or suburbanites and inner city.

Teachers too are assigned. However much they may get satisfaction from their students, after years of association, each day almost entirely with students, they feel the need of stimulation, and someone to talk to. Team teaching, or teams of individual teachers each trying out something in his own classroom to report on regularly to his group helps to change that pattern. And what would come of a teachers' lounge where custom said that students were not to be discussed?

## Schedules

The school day is ordinarily scheduled, less so at elementary and more so at secondary levels. Waiting within the schedule is as ordinary as being cut off in midstream. To ameliorate waiting and cutting off, much of school activity is planned in modules, what can be set up and finished, as it were, in forty minutes. Given amounts of material are to be covered or given activities completed in so many days. The schedule of any one day is much like that of every other day of the school year, and when variations occur, something is held to be amiss. Many norms of behavior and customary procedures are developed to accommodate the conditions of the schedule.

What would schools be like if schedules were more flexible? Class sessions could meet for longer blocks of time for, let us imagine, three days a week. Or the school term could be interspersed with occasional weeks of special projects or special mini-courses. More open space schools reduce the need for mass exchange of students at the ringing of the bells. And why must the school day run from nine to three, give or take an hour-or-so variation? Why must all students be there at the same hours? What might happen if school days ran ten hours and only some of the students were there at stipulated hours? It is not that any of these proposals in itself deserves endorsement. But as people made the school schedules rigid, people can make the schedules flexible.

## Need for Diversity

Still another feature of the pattern of the schools is the expectation of uniformity. Although efforts at individualization have had at least some modest, in some places splendid, success, still students in schools and in their social studies classes are expected to do pretty much what others do. Even individualized learning programs often assume that students are to learn much the same things, simply at their own rates. Textbooks and other curricular programs are still adopted system-wide or at least for the school as a whole. Curriculum innovation even in social studies often appears in the form of additions or special projects, dropped all too often when special funding runs out; innovation is extra, not to disturb the regular, not reorganization of the ordinary. Many a new teacher has learned the hard way to fit into what goes on in the building. Students eat in a mass lunchroom, teachers in their own, and everybody knows in advance what eighth-grade or eleventh-grade social studies is all about. And everybody knows too that schooling happens inside the four walls of the school.

What would happen if the schools reflected somewhat better the increasing richness and diversity of society at large by offering more choice? It is unnecessary that all students focus on a common topic or problem all of the time. And when the focus is in common, some of the time, diversity can be had in instructional materials, learning activities, and points of view. Why must educators look for the one best social studies program for the school? Why not several programs instead? Suppose that students, increasingly as they grow in maturity, were expected to choose within some broad guidelines among social studies courses and teachers. Perhaps those not chosen might be pushed into improvement or oblivion, and students might be more satisfied with the consequences. The converse might also be an interesting wrinkle; teachers might at least some of the time be allowed to choose some social studies offerings of their own or even the students with whom they could agree to work. Or suppose that more schools were made of schools within the school, each with some basic variation in program: or that students and their parents might decide upon which school of several schools to attend. Suppose that at least some of the time students were outside the building into the social world around them. What would that mean for social studies education?

An important condition of freedom is the recognition on all sides of the possibility of pulling up stakes and trying somewhere else. Attendance at school is required not only as a means to a place in society, but until sixteen years of age by law. How can schools capitalize upon choice to mitigate compulsion?

### Decision-Making Processes

A last of the characteristics of schools as institutions has to do with matters of power and decision. Power and a share in decision-making are ordinarily, and surely officially, distributed from the top down. Administrators have more than teachers, and teachers more than students. While pressure groups in the community do and at times exert control, neither parents nor others commonly have much say. And the organization, it is tempting to use the term "system," may have more to do with social studies education and what goes on in schools than any of these groups.

Many of the ways of schools are not formally decided upon by anyone: they are there by custom or unexamined expediency.

Power and a share in decision-making ought not then to be conceived as a zero-sum game, where some must lose that others gain. If more sorts of persons had more share in deciding more matters, more people might learn from their experiences. The process of reformulation in education and especially in social studies education might be facilitated. In many schools the question of whether moneys are to be spent for a textbook rather than for a variety of curricular programs, or instructional materials, or for social studies education at all is never actually up for discussion. No regularized channels for raising the question exist; hardly anybody can move, not even those at the top. When the rules of the game are insufficiently open to inspection, several games go on concurrently, between teachers and administrators, between students and teachers. The rules of the game that foster education are hardly in play. The field of decision-making need not be a fixed pie in which larger slices to some mean smaller slices for others; the field may truly become a bigger and bigger pie.

Suppose that schools each as a unit, although in relation to larger units, worked out regularized channels and informal ways of involving administrators, teachers, students, others on school staffs who provide their services, parents and the school community in how things should go in school. How should voice and influence be weighted when some are still young and others less immediately involved in daily living of the school? And how should the interests of the broader social world be represented in the local school? It is hard to say. Yet it is worth thinking about what might be opened up for thought and action.

What processes and procedures will be needed: representative assemblies, real student councils, forums and *ad hoc* committees, grievance panels, ombudsmen, neutral mediators, conferences, opinion samples, regularized classroom consideration of issues and cases? Not much imagination has yet been put to needed practices.

All sorts of concerns have to be up for examination: curriculum, playground rules, the school schedule, instructional materials, assemblies, the school paper, whatever is of concern: and it must be examination with accounting for both circumstances and consequences.

The decision-making processes will have to be carried on with due recognition for the worth of knowledge and methods of inquiry. They come from insightful and systematic search and capability to explain, and not from hallowed misconception, arbitrary preference, or simple majority vote. Children and society at large are entitled to expect that what is learned in social studies and in other fields can be counted on as useful and that the processes of education in practice are decently trustworthy. All that is, in the end, what students go to school for.

The decision-making process will have to be carried on with due recognition that some rules of the game, the ways it is supposed to go, must exist and in some form reasonably acceptable to those involved; without that identification, it is hardly possible to "go" at all.

The decision-making processes will have to be carried on with due recognition of the spirit of search and of fresh venture. There is no prior assurance that what has been known to be best will be what the schools will become. But prior assurance has never been the basis of good social studies education. Rather has it been the growth of ability to cope with a changing social world. That kind of social studies education will depend in large measure upon the directions and practices of the schools of which it is part and parcel, and can, in turn, exert its own influence.

Social studies educators can make a difference, as individuals and as members of organized, active groups, in their own classrooms and in the reformulation of their schools. They can make a difference by thoughtful, courageous, and resolute choice. There is no going back in a time of change. I quote, I believe, Will Rogers, "Education ain't what it used to be—and never was"—and never will be. The choices before us are those of what to make it, what directions, what reorganizations.

I use Lincoln's words. "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, so we must act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves. . . ." We may then find the way for ourselves, for the young, and for society.

# 1973

# SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION: DILEMMA, DIVISIONS, AND DIRECTIONS

*Harris L. Dante*

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**This presidential address was presented on November 16, 1973 to the 53rd Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at San Francisco, California. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 38 (February 1974): 187-194. ERIC Number: EJ 091 938.**

# 1973

## Social Studies Education: Dilemma, Divisions, and Directions

*Harris L. Dante*

Anyone who thinks that there has been little change or improvement in social studies education need only to go back and survey the NCSS Presidential addresses and other professional literature of the past twenty years.[1] It was only about fifteen years ago that the non-western world was discovered. There was a lack of federal funding for the social studies ten years ago and the revolution in materials has come within that time span. Although there have always been good teachers who refused to accept rote memorization as a substitute for thinking, we did not have any so-called methods books that were theoretically oriented until 1955 and 1956[2] and then it took the "new" social studies to popularize reflective thinking and clothe it with new terminology.

The social studies have responded to the great social upheavals of the sixties, teachers are better prepared, state certification requirements have been upgraded and we have witnessed much significant innovation. Many teachers are conscientiously striving to establish a warm and helpful personal relationship with students and are proving that a positive attitude and motivation can overcome environmental handicaps.

Without supporting scientific evidence, it would still be reasonable to assume that social studies teaching has played a part in making Americans aware of the kind of world in which we live. The gains in civil liberties, in increased international understanding, in more independent voting patterns, and in more efforts to solve social problems can be attributed in part to the general improvement of social studies instruction. Thus, there is much that is right with the social studies.

However, much remains to be done and our concern as professionals should be to take stock of where we are. We need to have an awareness of the magnitude of the job which we have assumed and to realize the demands that are being made of today's social studies teacher, especially the beginning teacher. We need to face up to the extent to which we fail as a profession and the manner in which we ride every fad and accept every new proposal, with its accompanying jargon, no matter how lacking it may be in substance. Not to be overlooked is the extent to which we allow our professionalism to be perverted by those who have no place in our ranks, by administrative bureaucratic practices that only harm the improvement of social studies instruction, by external threats to the academic freedom that is crucial and by the traditional indifference of laymen to the social sciences. To overcome many of these obstacles will require that we earn respect that we may not always presently deserve. We need to appraise realistically the task that faces us or else we will either have reached the end of the dream or we will have created a mission impossible.

In the biased judgment of at least one observer the social studies has always been the most difficult subject in the school curriculum. The social studies teacher has always had to be knowledgeable in regard to a half dozen or more disciplines, where selection is mandated, although there is no agreement among the experts as to what is important. Moreover, the teacher deals with subject matter which has no fixed continuity or sequence and has the problem of interesting students in concepts that are often abstractions. It has always been too insightful a task to entrust to a fullback.

At the 1952 Annual Meeting of the NCSS a resolution was passed on the meaning of the term "social studies" which declared that it "is the overall name for a group of subjects that includes history, geography, civics, economics and sociology. . . . This is the usage, and the only implications of the term as used, in the name of the National Council for the Social Studies."[3] Today, however, it is generally agreed that the social studies is much more than just the social sciences simplified for instructional purposes.[4] If the goal is to teach decision making regarding contemporary issues, then the social studies teacher is going to have to be acquainted with and keep abreast of complex social problems requiring knowledge of the social sciences at a very sophisticated level. The teacher would also have to be able to make use of science, literature, philosophy, and the arts wherever relevant. Teaching decision making also requires that the teacher is skilled in logical analysis and is able not only to do reflective thinking but can teach it to others. The truth is that while we may want to give primary emphasis to the affective domain we have not done a very good job in the cognitive domain. We have quite properly tried to make learning an exciting experience often using discovery approaches and leading the student toward what in many cases are preconceived ends. Sooner or later, by whatever means, when the initiatory activities have been completed, when the problem has emerged and has become a real problem for the student, there will then have to begin a systematic study of facts taught in context and relevant to the issue, which will result in the understanding of concepts and the establishment of generalizations resting on solid evidence. The study of ecology, for example, would involve many scientific and technological factors as well as politics, government, social consequences, economics, etc. On too many occasions when heated discussions have been set in motion concerning a contemporary issue there has been far more heat than light and too little substance, resulting in a pooling of ignorance.

Recognizing the many facets of teaching and learning and the many skills required of the teacher, our concern here is in what subject matter knowledge is required, the kind of professional assistance we provide the beginning teacher, and some of the divisions and dichotomies that operate as obstacles and some directions that might be taken.

It becomes clear that what is needed are more interdisciplinary approaches to the study of current issues. The fact is we have had very little real curriculum change in this direction and what we have had has often not been good. We have been completely lacking in humility. In fact, we have probably been presumptuous in assuming that we can send beginning teachers out to teach "social studies," or that complex social issues can be competently studied. One rarely finds any such thing. On too many occasions the "social studies" teacher is teaching one of the separate disciplines and doing it in a conventional and traditional way. Even the mini courses or thematic courses that are currently popular are often merely units pulled out of an established course. Unless there is careful planning there may even be a considerable loss of articulation and integration in the total program.

In the seventies with the focus on a social issues-oriented program there will be an even greater need to bring all of the interrelationships between the social sciences into an interdisciplinary synthesis. It is evident today that there are significant developments in the disciplines and moves toward more interdisciplinary cooperation. At the same time there are problems in bringing the needed subject matter to bear on contemporary issues. Thus, the teacher will have to keep his subject matter knowledge abreast of rapidly changing fields and at the same time see their relationships relative to a given problem.

## Examples of Aspects of Subject Matter Requiring Teacher Competency

In economics many professional economists, as well as economic educators, are agreed that concentration on economic growth has done little to solve the great social disorders of our time and that the nature of modern social problems is going to force more interdisciplinary understanding and more application of economic theory. Leonard Silk has written: "Perhaps some danger exists that economics. . . will drown prematurely in a sea of related disciplines before it has solved some of its own traditional problems. . . . Yet it seems to me that efforts to solve even those traditional economic problems cannot be hampered, but only advanced by a deeper understanding of many matters that lie beyond the boundaries of conventional economics."[5] One of the conclusions of a research study carried out by the Center for Economic Education, University of Connecticut, likewise was: "Economic educators of the future should be known, perhaps as social science educators, or at least have the background, ability, and interest to promote economic education within a broader interdisciplinary context."[6]

It is quite clear that in the field of government the confrontations between the various branches of government and the various constitutional crises of the Nixon administration will force considerable rewriting of the textbooks. The teacher will have to examine many constitutional questions in an entirely new frame of reference. The President's war-making power has emerged as one of the great weaknesses of the Constitution, while secrecy in government and the ignoring of constitutional restraints could launch us into a nuclear war without our ever knowing what caused it.

The decline in the birth rate has further complicated the life of the sociologist who already faces the problem of examining and explaining the rapid changes in institutions and in our social class structure.

The value of anthropology in a social studies program has been made unmistakably clear yet relatively few teachers have any acquaintance in the field and some state departments have only recently required as much as one course.

The High School Geography Project claims to have reached ten percent of the two million students taking geography courses.[7] Yet on the whole the teaching of geography remains a disaster area. What is needed, as much as anything, is for the geographer to help the history teacher, so that at least the latter will pull the map down once in awhile. Consider the geography involved in teaching about the Civil War. The Mississippi River cut the Confederacy in two and the war was fought simultaneously in an eastern and a western theater, while the Appalachian range provided the setting for the struggle to secure passes and valleys. Control of the Ohio River valley was the key to Lincoln's military and political policy in the early years of the war. All of the major campaigns were amphibious combined land and sea operations. Rivers were of such importance that the Union armies were named after them.

History lends itself readily to narration and description and many prospective social studies teachers, even though enrolled in a comprehensive program, find it difficult to be analytical and often shy away from the behavioral sciences, particularly from economics. The dearth of economics teachers has been well documented and many school systems have put more economics in their social studies curriculum only to discover that they didn't have teachers prepared in the field.

Some have suggested that while the new social studies of the 60's stressed the structure of the separate disciplines and was subject centered, the new social studies of the 70's will emphasize values. This might well be true judging from the sale of NCSS publications dealing with values. If so, we would again be focusing on something which is really not new since value analysis, value clarification and the resolving of conflict have always been at the heart of decision making.

However, in dealing with values the teacher has to critically examine beliefs that many regard as articles of faith. If this is to be done the teacher will have to have knowledge that will establish conclusions based on authority and a dedication to truth and fairness that will earn the right to subject belief to analysis.

Improved subject matter preparation in both breadth and depth is one way to gain competency that will lead to respect for the social studies which is often now lacking by both parents and students. It has often been noted that everyone is his own expert in the social sciences. Socrates probably said it first in *Protagoras:* "If the state is faced with some building project, I observe that the architects are sent for and consulted about the proposed structures, and when it is a matter of shipbuilding, the naval designers. . . . But when it is something to do with the government of the country that is to be debated, the man who gets up to advise them may be a builder or equally well a blacksmith or a shoemaker, merchant or shipowner, rich or poor, of good family or none. No one brings it up against any of these . . . that here is a man without any technical qualifications, unable to point to anybody as his teacher, is yet trying to give advice. The reason must be that they do not think this is a subject that can be taught."[8]

Moreover, the teacher has to cope with the irrationality of the Archie Bunker mentality and those businessmen who judge social institutions in terms of economic efficiency and whose chief line of defense is that the educator has never met a payroll. The first must be realistically understood in order to help him understand. As for the latter, what is wrong with assuming that a businessman can discuss an idea?

There is the added problem of sustaining faith in our system when it is clear that frustration and cynicism have led to indifference and a concern limited to one's personal welfare. We have witnessed confusion in regard to personal morality and often complete indifference to public morality. In fact, as someone has noted, those who have been most opposed to crime in the streets have promoted crime in the suites.

It is disconcerting that men who were the products of some of our best schools could so misread and pervert the right of dissent. Some have observed that the revelations and prosecutions in regard to Watergate are proof that the system does work. Others have noted that it was all a bit of luck depending on the actions of an $80-a-week night watchman, a courageous Republican federal judge and the persistence of the *Washington Post*. Still in some societies the watchman would not have dared blow the whistle, or he would have been eliminated, and the newspaper would have been repressed.

In teaching the core values of our society the teacher has to deal with moral values. It is really a conservative position to uphold the ideals of American democracy. Individual liberties, equality of opportunity, the worth and dignity of all men, and the setting of an example that will gain the respect of all mankind are built into the fabric of American society. It is a sad commentary that the most concern in the Kissinger hearings was over the wiretapping issue rather than the extent to which balance of power politics, including the use or threat of force, has become the chief instrument of American foreign policy. There should have been more probing in regard to the extent to which the United States can strengthen international morality, observe legal restraints and strengthen an enfeebled United Nations.

Although it has not always been done in regard to problems of desegregation and integration the teacher could play a more important role in matters of international and domestic morality than could be expected of the politician.

Asking teachers to deal with controversial issues is calling upon them to undertake the risks of purposeful teaching. We must firmly oppose the serious threats to academic freedom that exist today. Yet we have been able to carry on programs and deal with topics that formerly were taboo. The thesis of Revel's book, *Without Marx or Jesus*, is that America is a society which has the freedom to permit challenges to the Establishment.[9] T. George Harris writes that the tolerance of protests and demands "often calculated violence, can be explained only if a large body of opinion shared at least part of this belief." He notes that we owe a major debt to our Black citizens for having forced a conscious reexamination of many of our institutions and practices while there is still time to make repairs.[10]

Others say that this is too optimistic, that the sixties were another time and the forces of change have already been checked and driven back. They believe that the steam has gone out of the forces for change, even on the college campuses, that the problems are too complex and that many are tired, frustrated and indifferent.

The most pessimistic are those who believe that democracy itself may be failing. Both Walter Lippmann and Senator Fulbright, for example, have questioned the viability of democracy in a large industrialized society. The latter has written: "We are brought up to believe that ours is a great system, and it has a great history, but it is under various serious burdens at the moment. Whether we can pull it out and preserve a degree of democracy remains to be seen. I hope we can. But if we can't we will be no worse off than any other people. We'll simply develop a little different system, and, maybe in a hundred years we will quit pretending that we are a democracy and admit we are an oligarchy or plutocracy, which we seem to be."[11]

Thus, the social studies teacher will be exploring many issues that many Americans would prefer to go unexamined. Many do not accept the self-criticism in which only a democracy can engage. This is actually a source of strength, because weaknesses are exposed and the final decision emerges with more unanimity after having competed with other ideas. Likewise the teacher who is committed to change accepts Robert Maynard Hutchins' view that any good educational system is constantly at war with the culture. Not that the school is not part of society, but that it continually seeks to improve it. This position is certain to be opposed by those who regard America as a finished product with its great ideals accomplished. These would regard the United States as a static society and would use education to glorify the past and to pass along our cultural heritage uncritically.

Another problem which is important in value analysis is the matter of reification. To reify is to mistake the symbol, the gesture, or the spoken word for the actual deed or performance. Thus the flag as a symbol gets confused with a given ideology. The cross or the Bible or a profession of one's creed stands for the kind of life the faithful are supposed to lead. The statements of a politician are taken at face value and often accepted in place of his actual voting record. The beautiful girl in the tobacco ad is identified with the cigarette. One is advised to use Karate and then be on guard against an assault by eager females.

As Earl Johnson has declared, some of the most noble but most meaningless slogans are "America Love It or Leave It," "Back Your Local Police," and "Jesus Saves." One representing a different ideology might be "Power to the People." Such abstractions mean different things to different people. Unless we can interpret them with more explanation, they give us little aid in understanding them or any clues to guide our social behavior.

Many examples could be given to show that within each field of specialization the teacher is expected to be familiar with current scholarship, recognize proved authority, make proper use of professional terminology and rise above the conventional wisdom. Moreover, in seeking the truth it is often necessary to dig for the facts, which in some instances takes some doing.

This task is made more difficult by two decades of government by public relations, by official lies and misrepresentations, by rhetorical overkill, by assurances that all is well and by the fact that the full story cannot be found in the popular press. Since one current issue is whether to spend more money on national defense or on domestic programs, a useful example relates to military expenditures. There were more generals and admirals, for that matter more army colonels and navy captains, in 1972 for a force of 2.3 million men than in World War II when 12 million men were in the armed forces. A report on Military Manpower prepared by retired Lt. General James M. Gavin and released September 21, 1972 goes on to state: "This fiscal year one active duty officer or non-commissioned officer is budgeted for each lower-ranking enlisted person (privates, seamen and airmen). At the end of 1969 this ratio was one-to-two."[12]

Senator Harold Hughes has reported that we have 600,000 armed forces personnel plus 450,000 dependents overseas scattered among 322 major bases and over 3,000 minor facilities around the globe,[13] while a study by the General Accounting Office reported on March 26, 1973 that every one of our forty-five major weapons systems had a cost overrun which totaled $31.3 billion.[14]

In addition to seeking out specific facts, the social studies teacher must be able to aid in clarifying many abstract concepts and to have students study them in a realistic context. The terms democracy and communism may be used for illustration.

Carl Degler has laid down three criteria for judging if a nation is a democracy: 1. some constitutional provision for peaceful and orderly change of the government, 2. half of the adult population eligible to vote, and 3. not more than one fifth of the eligible voters voting for totalitarian parties. Applying these criteria in 1961, democracies were found only among the nations of Northwestern Europe and Switzerland; the United States, Canada and three Latin American countries (Costa Rica, Chile, Uruguay) in the Western Hemisphere; plus Australia and New Zealand.[15] Today's record would be no better, while the "free-world" includes Brazil, Guatemala, Haiti, Spain, Portugal, Greece and so on.

Likewise we cannot deal with communism as an abstraction. What are we talking about?—1. an economic system?—if so, that is not what the Soviet Union has, 2. a totalitarian dictatorship? 3. an international revolutionary movement? or 4. plain Russian or Chinese nationalism? For that matter which brand of communism are we discussing—Russian, Chinese, Yugoslavian, Albanian, Cuban or North Vietnamese?

In studying how our democracy works it is also necessary to be knowledgeable and insightful in handling the political realities, which are a source of confusion and amazement to foreign observers, and are often not clearly understood by many Americans. In addition to recognizing the conservative coalition which has controlled Congress since 1937, the teacher must be alert to changes that are taking place within the parties in regard to such matters as the shifting of ethnic blocs, economic groups, geographic regions, the youth vote, etc.

There is also a need to recognize that the endorsement of programs that are in the best interests of society or the abandonment of policies which are outmoded, in the judgment of the majority of expert opinion and perhaps by the majority of the public, are not articulated by the press or put into effect until they are given respectability by a Republican President. This is just the way it is and is not a partisan opinion. Thus, President Nixon was able to reverse a policy toward China, which had been unrealistic for twenty years, with very little criticism from his own party and in spite of the fact that much of his own career had been built on anti-communism.

*We have been trying to cite only a few examples to illustrate that the aspects of subject matter in which the social studies teacher should have competency are quite extensive.* It might be useful to take stock of what has been done to help the beginning teacher achieve professional status in regard to all aspects of teaching and learning.

## Taking Stock of Developments in Social Studies

Teacher preparation across the country, in spite of some outstanding and innovative programs, still consists of education psychology, principles of teaching, special methods, and student teaching. In too many instances subject matter preparation is minimal and it is still possible to be certified in a single major field. Unrealistic combinations of some social studies combined with other subjects are quite common. Even more sophisticated programs often send students out ready to follow the latest teaching model but with little notion of how it is actually going to relate to students and with little involvement of substantive content.

We are beginning to get some helpful and cumulative research in such areas as questioning and student-teacher interaction, but in general, significant research in social studies education is lacking. Reasons given have been that professors are not research-minded, that too many are not trained in empirical research, that they do not know how to choose worthwhile research problems and that too many dissertation topics are isolated and fragmented. This is probably an accurate assessment although one would hope that research is not interpreted too narrowly.

Every summary of research in recent years has deplored the overabundance of studies that prove nothing and the lack of significant cumulated research related to broad and fundamental problems of teaching the social studies.[16]

In the latest report in the *Second Handbook of Research on Teaching*, 1973, Shaver and Larkins assert: "In looking over the writings about teaching social studies, one is struck by the lack of a body of systematic, empirically based knowledge. The research frequently involving surveys of expert opinion has not been significant in terms of affecting classroom practice, building a body of knowledge upon which decisions about classroom practice could be made, or laying a foundation for further research."[17]

In education we always seem to be starting from scratch and if you live long enough you will see certain movements come around for the second or third time. Some of you will recall the millions of dollars spent by the Columbia Citizenship Project in the early 1950's. It did produce some valuable materials, especially those that were called laboratory experiences. Some of their effort, however, was a lesson in futility.

The projects of the last several years have wrought a revolution in materials but the problem of dissemination has not been solved, charges of gimmickery have been leveled at some of the best of them,[18] and in spite of efforts to make them teacher proof the problem of teacher expectations remains. Too many teachers expect that these aids can be adapted to their particular teaching-learning situation with a minimum of effort. The fact is, of course, that there is no package deal and the teacher will have to work diligently and insightfully at adapting the resources to his own knowledge, skills, and philosophy and to his students' needs and experiences.

Nor is there too much that is new under the sun in the area of curriculum. Leon Marshall and Rachel Goetz co-authored *Curriculum-Making in the Social Studies* as Part XIII of the Report of the American Historical Association Commission on the Social Studies. They advocated building the social studies curriculum around the nine basic social processes which every society has to face. This sounds like very modern stuff and yet this volume was published in 1936. One sub-heading is even entitled "Man and Ecological Balance."[19] Neal Billings in his book, *A Determination of*

*Generalizations Basic to the Social Studies Curriculum*, published in 1929, lists 888 generalizations.[20]

Some of the areas in which much promising work has been done reflect specialization in regard to certain strategies and techniques, but often reveal very little subject matter knowledge. Some classification problems can prove to be very difficult for the taxonomist. The question "Why was the crime of '73 called a crime?" seems to be a simple matter of factual recall. It actually is the key to a complete set of interrelationships and the establishment of many significant generalizations having to do with our monetary system and inflation. In fact, if the student or teacher cannot correctly respond to this question it is safe to assume that little is known about the entire free silver issue. It is a good example of how a teacher could teach the facts in the case and miss the real reason for teaching the lesson—maybe not even understand it. The question of the relationship between the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and the police power of the states involves the conflict between these two principles which was a gamut that every piece of social legislation has had to run since 1885. It includes not only the understanding of these and other concepts but the entire history of the battle for social justice with appropriate court cases. These examples, if fully developed, would serve to bring home the complexities of the task faced by the teacher in the cognitive areas.

While social studies education has received more attention and more funding and much progress has been made, particularly in regard to materials, there are certain dualisms that operate to keep us from achieving the professional stature that the size of the job requires.

(1) *There is the lingering hostility between the liberal arts and professional education which creates tension in teacher education.* The historian Charles Sellers has described how he overcame some of his preconceptions when he began to become acquainted with professors of education in meetings that took place in Washington or some other neutral ground rather than on his own campus. He argues that "closing this personal gap is crucial to closing the gap between what is usually called content and method. . . ."[21] The Committee on Teaching of the American Historical Association has said that it does not matter if the methods courses are housed in education or in liberal arts as long as "the instructor . . . [is] able to communicate with and gain cooperation from his colleagues in both departments, school teachers, and school students."[22] Many liberal arts departments would not be this willing to relinquish control over the methods course. R. Freeman Butts has said: "There were and there are some teachers and some professors of education who are narrow pedagogues, just as there are some liberal arts professors who are sterile pedants. . . . Let's face it, and let's be the

first to set our houses in order. Let's sweep pedagoguery out of teacher education and let's hope that our academic colleagues in the arts and sciences do the same with pedantry, but let's do it whether they do it or not."[23]

It is simply difficult for the social studies teacher to learn his profession if derision replaces mutual respect, and conflict, rather than cooperation, prevails between two groups that are both vital to his preparation.

(2) *There are the differences between the generalists and the subject matter specialists in such areas as curriculum development and supervision.* At one extreme are those generalists who abhor the thought of any kind of subject matter and at the other are those specialists who go their separate way in a traditional manner. There is a place for the general curriculum theorist aside from the fact that many school systems are unable to have specialists to direct programs in the various subject areas. Ideally, however, both in areas of program direction and supervision, a social science generalist with an interdisciplinary competency would be required. Student teaching supervision is more effective when the supervisor has some specialization in the subject area and it is not always safe to assume that the cooperating teacher has the expertise of the master teacher. In Ohio a State Department of Education prescription which stated that the cooperating teacher must have a Master's degree and three years' successful teaching in the subject area in order to be eligible to supervise a student teacher had to be abandoned. There were relatively few willing and able teachers presiding over social studies classrooms who met even this minimal requirement and certainly not in the numbers required for the prospective teachers needing this important practical component of their professional preparation.

(3) *Then there is the question of the relationship between history and the social sciences or whether history is a social science.* Many historians would say that history should not concern itself directly with the problems of the contemporary world and that history more properly belongs with the humanities. There are behavioral scientists who would agree and would gladly exclude history from any social studies curriculum on the grounds that it has little predictive value and produces dubious generalizations in contrast with the social sciences. Others would hold that there are various levels of generalizations, that those of the other social sciences are at best relative, and that valuable insights necessary to an understanding of the present can be contributed by history. As has often been said, it is difficult to know where we are without some understanding of how we got there.

In any event, the pedagogical problem of history in a social issues oriented social studies program is obvious and historians have still not been able to respond to the questions raised by Arthur S. Bolster. He challenges three of the historians' claims by noting that 1. to assert the importance of the past raises the question of which past and thus the problem of selection of content arises, 2. the historian has failed to impart to students the method which he believes to be important, and 3. there is a difficulty of using history to build allegiance to our culture while at the same time teaching critical analysis.[24]

Acknowledging the problem does not negate the importance of history or lessen the value of historical perspective in sharpening our understanding of contemporary problems by acquainting us with their origins and development. History does not need to be mere description, narration or exposition. A sense of history would help in overcoming the ruinous past-present dualism which is often forced upon us. Some would say that history could be the all-encompassing subject, certainly the discipline that could link the social sciences and the humanities.

(4) *There is the conflict between those who would organize around the separate disciplines and those who would favor an interdisciplinary curriculum.* The emphasis on the separate social sciences in the 1960's may have increased our knowledge and skills regarding the structure and method of the disciplines, but it probably worked against the integration that is acquired in a modern social studies program. As has been noted, there is an increased awareness of the need to bring the disciplines together in the attempt to understand and solve contemporary problems. There is probably no greater curricular problem than the challenge of producing teachers who have both some specialization and some interdisciplinary competence. The need for the development of the social science generalist at the secondary level will not be fulfilled until there can be more interdisciplinary cooperation.

### Strengthening the Profession

Without minimizing the importance of all the other factors that are involved in teacher education, especially in the areas of student-teacher relationships, the emphasis here has been on the need for better preparation in content and method. Not in any traditional sense but at the sophisticated level demanded of today's social issues oriented social studies program. A few suggestions follow which would strengthen us as a profession.

1. In a period of an oversupply of teachers there is an opportunity to become more selective in admitting candidates to teacher education in the social studies. Every institution should take the necessary steps to insure that those going out to teach are competent and fully qualified.

2. There is little doubt that we need to move to a five-year curriculum. There just is too much to be done in four years. The fifth year could very

well be largely an internship involving various kinds of practical experiences, in which theory would be tested and refined.

3. The student should have a comprehensive background of course work in the social sciences. This should involve more than mere adherence to the additive principle. Some interdisciplinary programs should be included in the curriculum. There would be opportunity for putting learning theory into practice, learning to work with materials and to use educational media in various kinds of learning situations. Teacher preparation should include opportunities to analyze the teaching act and to study logical analysis as a part of reflective thought.

4. The teacher should be a scholar trained in the various social sciences. Graduate study could be used to give more depth in at least one field which would provide more authority and at the same time make more clear the inherent relationships with the other disciplines. School systems should exercise some degree of control or at least more concern over the teacher's graduate preparation. Far too many teachers move into areas of administration, curriculum, guidance and counseling and so on, only to spend their career in the classroom. We have probably trained enough administrators for the next five hundred years.

At the same time classroom teaching must be made the heart of the entire enterprise with appropriate status and remuneration. No one should make more money than the master teacher except perhaps the superintendent and a few of his top assistants. No one should have to leave the classroom because he or she needs to make more money.

5. We need to reform and police the profession much as the medical profession has done since the Flexner Report.[25] In every state there are colleges that should be driven out of the business of teacher education. It is not only that they have a one-man education department but that they cannot provide adequate academic preparation. They might have no anthropologists, one geographer, and two economists, both experts in price-value theory.

Pressure must be put on administrators in regard to the selection and assignment of teachers. Teachers should not be expected or permitted to teach courses for which they are not fully prepared. In those schools that are large enough it might be helpful if there were teachers who were specialists in one of the disciplines and who could give leadership in a given area. This would also aid more effective team teaching.

6. There needs to be much more cooperation between colleges and the public schools. Much of the responsibility for teacher education should be placed out in the school and the community. Several states are presently moving in this direction. If the schools are willing and able to undertake

this professional assignment they would undoubtedly need and would be entitled to subsidy by the state. Moreover, cooperation would be required not just with the department of education but also with the academic groups and this means that these two collegial units would have to be able to work together.

7. Finally, steps must be taken to reduce teachers' load. None of the goals that have been discussed will ever be reached until the grinding burden imposed on many teachers is lessened. Many teachers are given little time to do the things they would like to do and thus too often the school is not a place of inquiry. From the classroom to the faculty lounge there may be few places where anyone is discussing an idea.

It has been demonstrated many times that many students go through school without questioning or challenging their basic beliefs or affiliations. We will not be able to develop the critical skills that students need and the revolution in social studies will continue to elude us until we can build a profession in which social studies teachers are prepared with competencies which match their dedication.

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14. Les Aspin, "Cost Overruns: a $31 Billion Luxury," *Ibid.*, 26.

15. Carl Degler, "We Count Too Much on Democracy," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 4, 1961, 10.

16. See especially Richard E. Gross, "A Decade of Doctoral Research in Social Studies Education," *Social Education*, 36 (May, 1972): 555-560: James P. Shaver and A. Guy Larkins, "Research on Teaching Social Studies," Chapter 39 in Robert M. W. Travers, ed., *Second Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1973), 1243-1262.

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# 1974

## A SOCIAL STUDIES MANIFESTO

*Stanley P. Wronski*

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**This presidential address was presented on November 22, 1974 to the 54th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Chicago, Illinois. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 39 (March 1975): 150-152. ERIC Number: EJ 113 350.**

# 1974

## A Social Studies Manifesto

*Stanley P. Wronski*

This has been an auspicious year for the National Council for the Social Studies. We have acquired a new Executive Secretary who, in his short time in office, has already indicated bold, new directions for the organization. We have launched an intensive development program that is designed to strengthen the voice of the Council when it speaks on behalf of all social studies teachers. We have broken new publishing ground with a unique yearbook. We have even departed from the traditional format of this opening session by presenting the multimedia "State of the Social Studies," which you have just viewed.

In keeping with the spirit of these innovative developments, it is only fitting and appropriate that this address also take on a distinctive flavor and orientation. I not only welcome the opportunity to provide this new slant but intend positively to implement it via the body of this address. To begin with, I intend to make this the briefest presidential address on record. My rationale for this is simple. If indeed one picture is worth 10,000 words—and I estimate that you have already been bombarded with over 300 slides—then you have already "read" 3,000,000 words. I challenge Evelyn Woods or any other speed-reading expert to improve on that. More important than their brevity, however, I intend for these remarks to keep within the spirit of the theme of this annual meeting—a theme which not only looks at the present state of the art in social studies but also extrapolates this view into the future. It is for that reason that I refer to it as a Manifesto—not

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because I am overly presumptuous about its impact, not because I expect all persons to subscribe to all that is said, not because it reflects a sure-fire, crystal ball view of the future. It is instead simply one person's manifestation of his view about an entity called "the social studies."

There is a specter hovering over the world today. It is the specter of global catastrophe. H. G. Wells' often quoted statement that "human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe" has especial relevance for us as social studies teachers. Surely by education he did not mean technical nor scientific knowledge alone. One could insert the word "social" or even "social studies" before education in his quotation and still retain the essence of his message.

## On Integrity

If we assume Wells' quotation has any validity, and if we further assume that the social studies are inextricably implicated in his words—and I accept both of these assumptions—then it is appropriate to identify the first of the nine topics of this Manifesto as that bearing on the issue of the *integrity* of the social studies. I do not equate integrity only with academic respectability—although that is important, nor only with relevance—although that is desirable, nor only with inherent interest—although that is valuable. These characteristics may be looked upon as necessary but not sufficient conditions for the social studies to have integrity. Rather I refer to the reason for the existence of the social studies as providing the base for their integrity. The integrity for the social studies is bedded in the fact that society demands for its own continued existence the kind of social orientation that is inherent in a good social studies curriculum.

## On Accountability

Probably no other current issue in education has generated as much confusion and cacophony as accountability. Social studies teachers—like all other teachers—have always felt themselves accountable. They are accountable primarily to the demands of their profession. These demands include a fearless concern with the real problems facing pupils and society. To paraphrase one of the sacred books of one of the leading religions of the world: "What profiteth a teacher who has her pupils accumulate all the facts and figures of the world but lose their mortal society?" We willingly accept being held accountable for dealing with real issues in a way that respects the individuality of each pupil unfettered by bogus quantitative criteria that are more suitable to the commercial marketplace than to a humane educational enterprise.

## On Patriotism

Like a double-edged sword, patriotism can be a powerful weapon whereby a nation cuts its way through a genuine threat from those who, like Hitler, would want to set civilization back a thousand years. Or it can be used as a rallying cry by scoundrels who would wrap themselves in a national emblem and try to lead its people, like lemmings, to self-annihilation. As social studies teachers, we have an obligation to view patriotism not as mindless indoctrination but as a rationally based value preference for a given society. We can perform most patriotically when we encourage our students to support those efforts of our society which exhibit a humane and genuine concern for humankind, encourage them to resist demeaning and immoral acts whether at home or abroad, and provide them with educational experiences which develop the inquiry-oriented skills that enable them to distinguish between the two.

## On Ethnic Studies

Since it is now not only permissible but even fashionable to quote Chairman Mao Tse-tung, perhaps we should reconsider modifying our national slogan from "E pluribus unum" which, freely translated, reads "melting pot," to a slogan like "Let a hundred flowers bloom." The recent efforts to encourage ethnic heritage studies are a logical and anticipated follow-up to the trail-blazing earlier Black Studies programs initiated during the past decade. Since we have now accepted the fact that Black can be beautiful, why not work toward gaining the acceptance of Polish as pulchritudinous?

## On Career Education

Like the concept of accountability, which may have intrinsic merit but is frequently prostituted in its educational applications, so also career education may be used for weal or woe. In its broadest and most defensible view, career education is a pervasive curricular emphasis which deals with the various life roles that an individual plays in his lifetime career. These include a person's role as a member of a family, one's aesthetic role, one's civic role, and especially one's occupational role. To the extent that a career-education program in the schools maintains this *balance* of interests, it is compatible with a good social studies program. It is incompatible with the social studies—or with any other area of the curriculum for that matter—when it (a) emphasizes the occupational role to the detriment or exclusion of other roles or (b) when it emphasizes the notion that the individual must adjust to his cog in the large economic machine. The social studies should provide a healthy antidote to this latter point of view by constantly pointing out that the social machine of which the individual is a part may also need adjusting and modifying. *It* exists for the individual and not vice versa.

### On Values

Whoever feels that we *can* avoid values in the classroom is committing an educational felony. Whoever feels that we *ought* to avoid values is compounding the felony. Sometimes it is late in one's lifetime—as with the atomic bomb physicist Robert Oppenheimer—when we realize that society abhors an ethical vacuum. As teachers, we must recognize the fact that some kind of system of values is emerging in the minds of every one of our pupils. Even those who maintain a nihilistic belief that no such entity as values exist are by that very position taking a value-laden stance. The philosophical positions available to social studies teachers range from complete relativism to an authoritarian absolutism. Although any point on this continuum is theoretically available for any teacher, the possibilities for maximum student moral development and self-direction appear to be the greatest somewhat to the right of complete relativism. This kind of posture enables the teacher to identify and actively endorse such widely agreed upon values as individual dignity and worth, equality before the law, respect for ethnic differences, and a preference for non-violent resolution of conflicts. With other value-laden issues, on which there are legitimate differences of opinion, teachers can best serve their students by having them engage in the rigorous process of identifying, clarifying, and intelligently deciding upon value preferences.

### On Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is to the teaching profession what freedom of speech is to the body politic. When either is denied, abrogated, or buried, we need not ask for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee. In its most elementary form academic freedom is simply the right of teachers to teach and the right of learners to learn. When it is viewed in this way, we can more readily see that it applies to all teaching situations at all grade levels. It is neither the exclusive prerogative nor the exclusive protection of those in institutions of higher learning. It protects elementary and secondary teachers as well in their right to deal competently with controversial issues, their right to use suitable texts, related reading, and other instructional materials in developing inquiring minds among their learners.

### On American Political and Social Institutions

The events of the past year involving the resignation of a President and Vice-President, the arrogant usurpation of power by public servants, and their callous abuse of public trust have placed a severe strain on the credibility index of our political institutions and the people holding positions of responsibility within them. It has become fashionable for the President and others to conclude from these experiences that they merely prove that our system works and that by some kind of divine guidance we have constructed an infallible, self-regulating, political mechanism that invariably rights our wrongs and steers us back to the true path. Not only is such an explanation simplistic, but it is downright dangerous. Like the charlatan who utters his incantations over a sick patient, such explanations assume there is a causal relationship between the incantations and the recovery. As social studies teachers, we should be more concerned with searching diagnoses of the political ills besetting the body politic and extend this diagnosis to related ills in our economic and other social institutions. We can no longer afford to feed our pupils a pablum-like diet of bland generalizations about the almost godlike character of our institutions. They will no longer swallow this.

### On Social Pollution

We are all aware that we face an environmental crisis. Over the past decade or so it has become brutally apparent that we must manage our natural environment in such a way that we resolve the potentially suicidal problem of harmonizing our finite resources with our infinite wants. One ecologist has drawn an intriguing analogy comparing our eco-system with a giant computer containing thousands of transistors. It is possible to abuse the computer by indiscriminately removing one, ten, or possibly scores of transistors without seriously impairing its output. But at some point the removal of just one more transistor will bring the whole operation to a whimpering halt. We hope we have not reached that stage yet; and indeed in the past few years, we appear to have made some progress. But what about the environment of our social institutions? How many more Watergates can our political system endure? How many more unconstitutional forays into international immorality can our foreign policy lead us to make? How much more economic dislocation can we endure, particularly the kind of economic maladies leading to attitudes of despair and dejection amidst our poor and disadvantaged groups?

Our individual responses to these questions and all other issues raised in this Manifesto will, of course, be dependent on our own educational, political, and economic biases. But neither as a social studies teacher nor as a member of a world society can I afford to ignore these issues. The searing words of John Donne hang over all of us: "No man is an island." We social studies teachers have not only the opportunity but the obligation to be in the vanguard of those who are striving to achieve our better tomorrow today. As we and our pupils inquire into the social problems confronting us today, we should very properly ask the "why" type of questions. But as we each project our vision of the improved world of tomorrow that we all seek, we must not forget also to ask "why not?" My charge to social studies teachers everywhere is this: Social visionaries of the world—Unite. You have nothing to lose but your hindsight.

# 1975

## THE FOURTH "R"

*Jean Tilford Claugus*

**Jean Tilford Claugus was the supervisor of social studies for the public schools of Cincinnati, Ohio.**

**This presidential address was presented on November 21, 1975 to the 55th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Atlanta, Georgia. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 40 (March 1976): 150-152. ERIC Number: EJ 133 588.**

# 1975

## The Fourth "R"

*Jean Tilford Claugus*

Once upon a time there was a great kingdom in the vast areas of the Eastern World where a vain emperor became so engrossed in self-gratification that he neglected, then forgot about, the needs of his people. He moved so far from the actualities of the environment that he believed whatever his court attendants murmured to him. And they soon learned that many favors came to them if they told him only the fantasies he wished to hear.

Each year there was great festival in the kingdom to celebrate its national birthday. For this occasion, the ruler ordered that a most elaborate wardrobe be prepared. It was to be of such thin filaments of gold and silver that it would be as light as gossamer and yet so brilliant as to outshine both the sun and moon combined.

On the day of the great festival, attendants brought forth the gossamer garments for the ruler's inspection. He remarked that they were, indeed, a masterpiece—so sheer as to be almost invisible. The servants draped them upon him, and he walked through the throngs in the streets, confident that he would have the eyes of everyone within whose vision he passed. And he did.

His subjects had heard about the new garments for months, but this day they saw nothing—for there was nothing of substance. The Emperor had no clothes at all. His disgrace was complete, and he withdrew to a faraway temple for a life of meditation, never to appear again.

I chose to paraphrase the old fable of "The Emperor's New Clothes" because I do not want the National Council for the Social Studies to find itself in a similar position. For the first time in many years, the organization, at the operational level, is in a position to revitalize the profession. In its euphoria, it must not close its ears and eyes to the ferment taking place in the kingdom. It dare not be lulled into complacency by a balanced budget while its constituents are fighting for survival in an untenable position created by the national revolution underway in education, a revolution where the supply of questions exceeds the reservoir of ready answers.

One of our distinguished past presidents in a recent letter to me stated, "It is clear in many parts of the country that the Social Studies field is not only in real ferment and dilution; it is beyond that, in RETREAT!"

We are all keenly aware that the amount of money available for Social Studies materials is declining rapidly. Many districts are reducing their requirements for Social Studies, while at the same time, new programs and large sums of money flow into vocational education. Social Studies supervisory positions are being reduced, reassigned, or eliminated. In many elementary schools where almost total instructional emphasis is being centered on skill development in reading and mathematics, there is almost no Social Studies taught at all. Attempts to integrate Social Studies materials into this process have either not been initiated or, because of poor planning, have resulted in chaos.

One example—a true story—may serve as an illustration. In one elementary school a Social Studies teacher had worked most diligently to have books with Social Studies content used by teachers of basic skills in mathematics and reading. One day she visited the teacher of mathematics to see how the program was working. She found that the children were, in fact, reading from the Social Studies materials—but in a somewhat unusual pattern.

The teacher was instructing them to read pages 1, 3, 5, 7, etc. Needless to say, the children were confused by the reading content sequence—but seemed to be concentrating on the number sequence quite well. When the Social Studies teacher inquired, ever so gently, the reason for this procedure, the reply was, "Oh, don't worry! Everything eventually fits together, because in the afternoon we read pages 2, 4, 6, 8."

It is to raise a warning about the future of the National Council for the Social Studies that I choose to speak to you about the Fourth "R"—namely, Reality.

The reality of the setting for this presentation, however, does not bode too well for its reception. First, it is a holiday and at this moment perhaps more conducive to leaving no turns unstoned than considering the reverse of this play on words. Second, I want to give voice to some of the realities which are already affecting the professional components of the Social Studies, and I am fully aware that many of you are in attendance at this national meeting to help you to forget, even if briefly, the various educational hassles which await back home. But, in spite of these deterrents, I believe that because you are here at the national meeting of NCSS, in Atlanta, you care enough about the Social Studies to critique with me this assessment of its future and the realities it must face.

Today, everyone seems to have become part of the host of cicadas piping for a return to the basics of education, the so-called three R's—Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic. At the same time, Social Studies is *not* considered a basic and is under escalating attacks throughout the country. Whether from the media, discussions with friends, dialogues with professional peers, or as victims of the interpretations and implementation of government guidelines, each of us bears some scar inflicted by this criticism of education and the growing chorus for return to basics, because we are part of the education Establishment itself.

In the Social Studies we stand exposed to a relentless analysis from a public where every man considers himself his own priest. This most certainly will destroy us if we continue to seek ways simply to protect ourselves from such attacks and do not develop a realistic, rational, and responsible offense. But, we must not lose sight of the fact that there is no cheap ticket to educational excellence which must include a viable Social Studies program.

We can no longer retreat into the mists of repetitive interpretations which seem to explain with such persuasiveness why the educational system of this country is producing crippled citizens—skill-crippled, value-crippled, and cerebrally-crippled. In fact, those of us working in the Social Studies who have been professing vociferously in reams of articles and projects that we support the development of citizenship education are, on the contrary, contributing to the apathy in the area, because we say we can do no further work without external funding. Today, when many students are so disinterested in assuming any citizenship responsibility by the time they leave high school that they even seem ready to welcome the mental monotone of a dictatorship which would make decisions for them, there is little panic in our ranks.

How much longer are we going to retreat into words? Already enough has been written in our area which, if the paper alone were recycled for fuel, it would provide sufficient energy to alleviate the nation's shortage for at least a decade.

When are we as Social Studies educators going to make those commitments necessary to translate our words about democracy, citizenship, values, inquiry strategies, and professionalism into action? How much longer can we philosophize about solutions when we have met the enemy and "they is us"? Successful education for citizenship can be expected only if it is realistic, comprehensive, conducted by competent teachers, and encouraged by administrators.

We are only twenty-five years away from the twenty-first century, in which our students will spend most of their lives. Time for the Social Studies educator is running out. If we do not face reality now, I predict we will no longer exist as an identifiable educational unit by that date.

I believe, however, that the National Council for the Social Studies, its Board of Directors, and the House of Delegates are ready to look at reality and act responsibly. Therefore, my theme of the Fourth R—Reality. In my estimation, after this year of close involvement with the profession, there are at least five realities which NCSS must face.

1. *The Reality of Being a Professional Organization*. To face this Reality the association will need to:
    a. Conduct an assessment of its current configurations, stresses, and support services
    b. Establish a Code of Ethics
    c. State its purpose with consistency
    d. Show representation of multi-cultural groups and minorities within its decision-making structure
    e. Double its membership within five years
    f. Continue to develop a viable field services program
    g. Support academic freedom with more than words
    h. Initiate viable research studies which can be transmitted into action within Social Studies classrooms
    i. Identify goals and priorities for which it is willing to be held accountable
    j. Identify and support a position on standards for the training of professional Social Studies educators.
2. *The Reality of Increasing Professional Visibility*. To face this Reality the association will need to:
    a. Provide information to legislators at local, state, and national levels *before* final legislative decisions are formulated
    b. Develop position statements on pertinent issues which will assist members and the public to understand controversial issues and respond rationally in solving problems of mutual concern

- c. Create a communication system which will be able to respond quickly to the members and to public issues of concern to Social Studies education
- d. Study those issues which may erode the position of Social Studies in the curriculum and take action to stop that erosion by planning a variety of ways to respond to these challenges
- e. Publish materials which will serve as guidelines for the improvement of Social Studies instruction.

3. *The Reality of Developing a Viable Program for Citizenship Education.* To face this Reality the association will need to:
   - a. Admit that present programs are inadequate
   - b. Seek broad support in the development of new programs which redefine citizenship to fit the demands of the times
   - c. Consider ways to improve the teaching of history as one approach to improve preparation for citizenship
   - d. Explore the systematic democratization of school environments and their relationship to preparation for citizenship.
4. *The Reality of Assuming Responsibility for the Quality of Social Studies Instructional Materials.* To face this Reality the association will need to:
   - a. Determine guidelines for curriculum content and development
   - b. Inform commercial publishers about these guidelines and the expectations of the association that they be recognized
   - c. Plan to provide a variety of ways to assist teachers and other personnel responsible for curriculum development to implement the suggested guidelines at the local and state levels
   - d. Initiate, design, disseminate, as well as monitor new developments in curriculum.
5. *The Reality of Organizing for Flexible Response.* To face this Reality the association will need to:
   - Maintain a viable financial posture which can support identified priorities
   - Keep central office organization streamlined for maximum response to constituents
   - Develop recommendations which will lead to broader representation for members within the decision-making structure of NCSS
   - Reconsider the purpose of the Advisory Committees
   - Evaluate the roles expected of elected officers
   - Respond consistently to the needs of elementary and secondary classroom teachers who constitute the largest component of NCSS membership.

Without facing these realities, I believe that NCSS will fit the description of a place given by the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland* as "a slow sort of country where it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place." Rather, NCSS should follow her advice: "If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

I challenge NCSS to decide, now, whether or not it wants to do more than just survive. If we really believe what we say we are about, the development of citizens able to function responsibly in a free society, then let's face the Fourth R of Reality and start running—*at least twice as fast!*

# 1976

# A CRITICAL VIEW OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES PROFESSION

*James P. Shaver*

James P. Shaver was a professor of education at Utah State University.

This presidential address was presented on November 5, 1976 to the 56th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Washington, D.C. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 41 (April 1977): 300-307. ERIC Number: EJ 155 921.

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# 1976

## A Critical View of the Social Studies Profession

*James P. Shaver*

As the Program Planning Committee sought a theme for the 56th Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, it seemed appropriate, during the year of the Bicentennial Celebration, to focus on the political, economic, and social tensions in the society. For ours is a nation born in tension, with a history of tension, and with an inevitable future of tension—because of the world setting, the plurality of interests domestically, and the value dilemmas inherent in our belief systems.

During the Planning Committee's deliberations, a question was raised about the profession itself—about our tendency to insulate ourselves from our critics—and it was proposed that a portion of the program be devoted to the topic, "Tensions Within the Profession." It was also suggested that, rather than have an outside speaker criticize us, the President take an insider's critical look at the "profession" as the theme of his Presidential Address.

It seemed like a reasonable idea, and I agreed. But as the Annual Meeting has drawn nearer, I have become aware of the extent to which, as one gets "inside" an organization and works to fulfill one's hopes for it, criticism can become difficult. My Annual Report to the NCSS Board of Directors and House of Delegates[1] reflects a strong sense of optimism and achievement. In it, I compliment, sincerely, the many members of the National Council who have worked and/or are working on important profession-building tasks and projects; and I express, again sincerely, appreciation for the dedication and diligence of our central office staff—the Professional Office, including Publications, and the Business Office.

I began to worry: Had I, in a sense, by agreeing to use the Presidential Address for criticism, usurped an important "outsider's" role—unintentionally, for I do believe that it is vital for social studies educators to be confronted with strong criticism.

But often the toughest criticism, to give and to take, is self-criticism. And that—tough self-criticism—is my intent in this Address. I have been known to offend some people. (Less well known is that I have even on occasion been offended myself.) And my assignment today is to be offensive.

Let me be clear, though, that my comments are not directed at *others*; rather they are directed at *us*, including me as a so-called social studies specialist and as President of the social studies professional organization. Also, it is itself an implied criticism that some of the questions I will raise have been raised before and not yet adequately addressed.

## The Notion of a Social Studies Profession

Let me confess at the outset that I had difficulty arriving at the title for this address. I pondered whether it should be "A Critical View of the Social Studies Profession" or "A Critical View of Social Studies." Is there such a thing as a "social studies profession"? That itself is a question that implies criticism.

One answer is to note that NCSS is in the midst of an attempted bootstrap operation to create a profession of social studies educators. A number of position statements are being prepared, and a Code of Ethics is even being developed,[2] in line with the statement in the Preamble of the Code of Ethics of the American Association of School Administrators, that Society demands that any group that claims the rights, privileges and status of a profession prove itself worthy through the establishment and maintenance of ethical policies governing the activities of its members. A professional society must demonstrate the capacity and willingness to regulate itself and to set appropriate guides for the ethical conduct of its members.[3]

Even if NCSS is finally successful in its attempts at professionalization, or even if some people would judge that we presently have a "profession," I had to ask: To whom does one speak if he or she wishes to address the "social studies profession," when NCSS membership constitutes only a minority of those who teach what we loosely call "social studies"?

Not only is NCSS membership relatively small, but there are few at the elementary or secondary teaching levels who consider themselves to be "social studies" teachers, even though colleges and universities have "social studies methods" instructors. If you ask prospective teachers enrolled in a social studies methods course what they are going to teach (as I do each quarter at Utah State University), they reply, "history," "geography," "economics," and so on—rarely, "social studies." And when I ask inservice teachers what they teach, the answers are typically the same. Moreover, the courses in the schools are generally labeled "history," "economics," even "problems of democracy," not "social studies."

Indeed, a lack of scope and sequence for social studies curricula is common. It is a rare instance when one comes across a K-12 curriculum—or even one for some fewer number of years, such as K-6 or 9-12—that is carefully structured with interrelated courses based consciously on some common "social studies" orientation, such as citizenship, rather than the old redundancy of United States history recycled and a scattering of social science courses taught largely independently of one another.

Have you ever had the difficulty I often have during a social evening? Someone asks, "What do you do for a living?" The reply that I used to give, "I'm a professor of social studies education," always drew a blank look; and I would then go on to try, rather unsuccessfully usually, to explain what social studies is—to people who have supposedly been through a social studies program as part of their schooling. I find that my colleagues in mathematics, science, and English education have few such problems. It is one reason that I now say that I teach statistics (which is not only true, but a conversation stopper).

Is there generally a "creature" called "social studies"? Undoubtedly, that question needs to be asked before asking: Is there a social studies profession? They are obviously interrelated questions. And, they raise three notions that need to be connected.

The first, going beyond the earlier quote from the Preamble to the American Association of School Administrators' Code of Ethics, is the notion of a "profession" which is, as I define it, a vocational group with special knowledge and competencies and a self-policing code of ethics. The definition needs to be linked to a second notion, which comes from a quote from Charles Silberman's book, *Crisis in the Classroom:*

> . . . [W]hat is wrong with elementary and secondary education. . . has less to do with incompetence or indifference or venality than with *mindlessness*.[4]

Silberman goes on to define "mindlessness," by implication, as lack of thought about ". . . purpose, and about the ways in which techniques, content, and organization fulfill or alter purpose." The third notion couples the definition of a profession and Silberman's insightful comment on mindlessness. It is contained in a couple of pithy lines by Arthur Coombs:

> The antithesis of professional responsibility is mindlessness. Professional workers should be held responsible for being able to demonstrate some rational basis for whatever they do, be it research, logical thought, experience, consistency with theory or whatever.[5]

The failure to address in a comprehensive way the questions of purpose and the impact of methods and content on purpose, to explicate the assumptions—empirical and philosophical—upon which we build curricula and teach, and to examine what we do for its hidden implications—that is, our mindlessness and, therefore, our lack of professionalism in its most important sense—is that basic shortcoming of American public schooling and of social studies in particular.

Much of the blame rests at the college and university level, where we should be especially reflective (supposedly reflectiveness is a characteristic of the academic mind, and providing time for reflection is one reason given for having lighter teaching loads at the university than at the elementary and secondary school levels). Social studies courses too often involve much time spent in teaching prospective teachers to write objectives and make lesson plans (without addressing the more important question of the rationale for the objectives) and in familiarizing them with new curricular materials, and too little time spent in grappling with the tough questions of purpose and justification of purpose. The same is true of courses for inservice personnel.

Those who are going to teach social studies or develop social studies curricula, or who are now doing so, and who do not get stimulation and help in rationale-building from their social studies methods and/or curriculum courses, are not likely to get it elsewhere on campus. University professors in the "academic" areas are generally notoriously unreflective about the assumptions underlying their own course content and teaching techniques. And philosophy of education courses tend to be too abstract and artificial to be of much assistance in the very real job of building a teaching and/or curricular rationale. The result, although I dislike saying it, is that social studies is to a large extent the epitome of mindlessness in American education.

## Citizenship

Our mindlessness is probably nowhere more evident than in the area in which social studies position statements and school district guidelines claim special interest—citizenship education. Despite the statements and guidelines, there is generally a lack of focus on the nature of citizenship and a lack of hard analysis of the various content areas—the academic disciplines, if you will—and their potential relationships to citizenship, as the basis for selecting materials and organizing social studies curricula. That is undoubtedly why the paradox that I noted in an article in *Social Education* in 1967[6] still persists: The claim, on the one hand, that citizenship is the major interest of social studies education: and, on the other hand, the scarcity of evidence that the number of social studies courses taken impacts either the quantity or quality of citizenship participation, accompanied by little logical relationship between the typical social studies curriculum and the real world of political thought and action.

The NCSS Board of Directors, in May of 1975, instructed our Executive Director that citizenship education is the focus of social studies education, and that he should represent the National Council for the Social Studies from that orientation. For pushing for that focus—citizenship education; not, let me hasten to say, the jurisprudential[7] or public issues[8] approach—I have been criticized for being too narrow, too restrictive. But I believe that the most important question facing the National Council for the Social Studies is whether NCSS is to be, as Shirley Engle queried in 1970,[9] a "smorgasbord of educational goodies and services" for people with various loosely related interests, or an organization with focus, with purpose, with thrust.

If citizenship is the intended goal of social studies education, why not focus the National Council's attention on it? Surely, the questions involved in upgrading our efforts in that area are so broad and difficult, and cry for attention from so many perspectives, that no one with almost any subject-matter background need feel excluded—limited, perhaps, but not excluded. There are organizations for historians *qua* historians, economists *qua* economists, psychologists *qua* psychologists, political scientists *qua* political scientists, and so on. Why not one organization in which we ask the subject matter specialists to join with those of us who are (some blush to admit it in "academic" company) social studies specialists, often without a specific subject-matter affiliation, to address the very significant question of what citizenship education should be in this society. The central query for NCSS should not be how to teach history, or economics, or political science better, but rather: what contribution does each have to make to citizenship education?

The answers to the latter question will, I suspect, help to answer questions about how to teach the subject areas better, for one of the major ironies of our mindlessness is our failure to follow up on our oft-stated belief in the Deweyean notion that involvement in problems real to the individual is essential to learning. We continue too often to pose for students the problems that are of interest to academicians, or to provide them with content based on those interests, and wonder why they are turned off.

### Social Studies and the Social Science Disciplines

Each quarter I am usually invited to spend a class meeting with the undergraduate social studies methods class at Utah State University. After asking the students what they are going to be teaching (and getting the typical responses, "history," "economics," and so on), I ask them why they want to teach. The most common reply is that they find the subject matter fields interesting and exciting (some, for example, "love" history or whatever it is they want to teach). And I tell them that they are dangerous persons to turn loose in the public schools. And I mean it! Most people do not share their commitment to the academic disciplines, with its frequent valuing of the abstract, conceptual orientations of the academicians; and they need to recognize that the bent for abstract thought, which has led them to worship at the feet of their professors in the various disciplines, will also put them at variance with a majority of their students.

One of the hardest lessons for us to learn as social studies "professionals" seems to be that what is appropriate for the academician is not necessarily appropriate for the instruction of the intellectually bright, but more practical, concrete-minded majority of people. Despite the analyses,[10] the protests, and the alternatives available, social studies programs continue to rely on materials developed from the orientations of academicians. In particular, teaching still tends to be dominated by subject-matter textbooks frequently filled with the meaningless over generalizations which, as Metcalf pointed out so well in the first *Handbook of Research on Teaching*,[11] result from the need, as knowledge and years of history accumulate, to write about more and more in the same number of pages.

### Academic Freedom?

Our overawe of and over dependence on academicians is reflected elsewhere—such as in our frequent lack of clarity about the meaning of academic freedom, on which NCSS has taken strong stands over the years.[12] We are not always clear on the difference between "academic freedom" for scholars, based on the need to protect those in the universities who are to push at the frontiers of knowledge and thought, and "academic freedom" for public schools, based on the quite different need of a democratic society to have an enlightened and informed citizenry.[13] The justifications and implications are different. Consider, for example, the claim by Terrel H. Bell, at the time U.S. Commissioner of Education:

> We need to avoid book burning and to protect the student's freedom to read. Here we have done pretty well. But when students are compelled to go to school and to use State-adopted textbooks, we must also protect the right not to read materials which offend the beliefs and feelings of fundamentalists and other minorities. Here we haven't done as well as we should.[14]

Our lack of clarity in this important matter is related, for example, to the MACOS controversy. I helped draft a statement[15] on MACOS that our Executive Director, Brian Larkin, presented, by invitation, on behalf of NCSS during the Congressional investigations into National Science Foundation support of curriculum development work that followed the eruption of objections to MACOS. The statement expresses confidence in the academic credentials of those who developed MACOS and the belief, which I support, that there should be a variety of curricula available for school people to choose from (what is sometimes referred to as "curricular pluralism"). At the same time, I have been quite astounded at the naiveté of the MACOS developers—because anthropologists are, after all, supposed to be particularly learned about cultural values and their impact on behavior—in not anticipating the potential impact of the MACOS curriculum on the values of children and the valid, even if not empirically substantiated, concerns of fundamentalist parents.

There is, I believe, an implicit relativism in the study of different cultures which poses a different dilemma, often not faced because we have not recognized the bias implicit in our own social science orientations. We must ask questions such as: Is it justifiable (Is it a legitimate part of "public school academic freedom"?) to expose all school children to all verified social science knowledge? Does the age level of the students make a difference? Might MACOS, for example, be more appropriate and defensible at the high school level?

When I pose such questions, I often am asked if I don't believe in the global-intercultural aspect of citizenship education. Well, we must ask if the important global education-intercultural understanding objectives of citizenship education cannot be handled in better ways at the elementary level. And we must even ask, to what extent are the global education-intercultural educational objectives that we commonly state founded on academically sound, but practically naive, views of the world? For example, should the emphasis in the elementary school be less on "understanding others" and more on exploring the need for, and the mechanisms to set up, institutions to mediate the conflict that is probably even more inevitable internationally than domestically; and at the secondary level, perhaps, on understanding how differing experiences influence one's frame of reference, as a basis for the constructive handling of inevitable differences?

## Parents and Social Studies

Mention of MACOS leads me to another matter often not adequately dealt with as part of our mindlessness: That is, what are the rights (the proper role) of parents in regard to the social studies curriculum? This question takes me back to the late 1950s, when there were sincere arguments over whether teachers must (or ought to) be involved in curriculum development. That, of course, seems like a ludicrous question today; and I predict that in a few years we will look back on questions about parental involvement in the same way.

The current movement by parents for greater involvement in curricular decision-making began in the 1960s, with protests from black and other minority groups that they should be involved in curricular decisions. They argued, correctly, that white teachers and developers were sometimes prejudiced and unjustifiably biased, but that even with the best of intentions, they did not understand certain ethnic backgrounds and needs. Then came the textbook controversies, sparked in part by MACOS, but by other materials and teaching techniques as well.[16] The parental protests may not reflect the thinking of the majority of those who send children to schools, or of those who pay the taxes to support them; but attention to minority wishes has a special place in our society with its commitment to human worth and dignity. And the protests should alert us to the need to consider the legitimate roles of parents in social studies education.

The time is past for statements such as the one made by William Haubner, of the NEA's Teacher Rights Division, earlier this year:

> Selection and presentation of material falls within the purview of the profession. You don't tell a carpenter which saw or grade of wood to use. If you let inexperienced, unsophisticated, unknowing people make the decisions, teaching quality will be impaired.[17]

Personally, I do tell the carpenter what grade of wood I want, and I instruct him about other things that might affect the character and quality of whatever I am having built. Parents (and most of us who teach are, after all, parents, too; people dichotomize strangely between our teaching and our parental roles) do have a legitimate interest in their children, in what happens to them in school, in their futures, and in the futures of the community and society. Hopefully, as professionals, we should bring expertise—special knowledge; careful thought about the nature of our society, including its basic values and other characteristics relevant to citizenship education; and educational competencies—to the curriculum development and instructional tasks. But we cannot, therefore, cast aside the interests of parents in the education of their children.

Parents must be involved, not because they are taxpayers (although that may be sufficient reason), but because their perspectives as essential individual ingredients of the abstraction "society" are invaluable. We need to build processes for the involvement of parents, and for ensuring that we have rationales for citizenship education that can be explained to, and debated with, parents and other lay people. We need, as professional educators, to be able to present and defend, from carefully developed positions, the values and needs of the society itself, in order to help parents and school people avoid being captives of narrow local interests. The balancing of local interests against more abstract societal interests is no easy task—ask the U.S. Supreme Court—but it is one to which we must address ourselves more specifically as part of our professional obligations.

Clearly, parents must be treated not as interlopers, but as essential resources, and as persons who have a right to knowledge about the curriculum and the right to involvement in curricular decisions. Parents may often not be particularly reflective about the needs of citizenship education. But that is not a criticism of them as much as it is of our own citizenship education efforts to date.

There is another aspect of parental involvement to be considered. It has become obvious in recent years that citizenship is not something taught within the confines of the classroom. We are coming to realize that the total school must be utilized as a context for learning how to function responsibly in a democratic society. That the schools have not been structured as institutions to achieve that end, and that the U.S. Supreme Court has had to remind school people how autocratic the hidden curriculum of the school is,[18] should be bases for grave concern in our organization: The professional group primarily concerned with citizenship education has lacked the insight and/or the courage to lead in addressing the impact of the total school environment on citizenship education.[19]

It is now also becoming obvious that even if schools can be made to function like democratic institutions, that will not be enough: Adequate citizenship education programs must go beyond the school into the community, and a few social studies programs are now social action oriented.

Why not go even further? Why not extend our educational influence beyond the teacher-directed and supervised situation? A 1976 Gallup poll indicated that 78% of the parents sampled wanted their school districts to offer special courses to help them help their children with their school work, even if the special courses necessitated increased taxes. So parents are interested. However, we need to go further than background courses for helping with homework. We need to make parents (and, by extension, labor unions, civic clubs, and so on) active, effective parts of the citizenship education process.

At Utah State University, we have an Exceptional Child Center which has taken on as one of its missions the improvement of education for handicapped children in rural, remote areas. To do so, the staff has developed a model for involving the parents of these children in their education through self-contained instructional packages that: (1) educate the parents about handicapping conditions, and (2) help the parents to help their children to learn in areas ranging from toilet training to math skills. This is one effective type of extension of professional competencies into the home to make parents a part of the instructional process. And there are others.

Clearly, the public schools have not succeeded in citizenship education. It is time to ask how to utilize the home and other social settings for citizenship education. How can we extend our curriculum development and instructional competencies to nonschool settings? The answer and its implementation will call for some unorthodox thinking by us and by funding agencies.

### Teachers and the Curriculum

The preparation of social studies teachers, and some implied expectations for them, also merit further examination. The tendency is still to prepare teachers in subject-matter areas (e.g., history, economics, government) without adequate attention to how the various subjects fit into a total K-12 curriculum, or to what additional areas, such as some aspects of philosophy, semantics, or journalism, might be relevant to citizenship education. The assumption that seems to continue to prevail is that the summation of courses in history and the social sciences will, magically, provide the content for good citizenship education instruction. This assumption leads to inadequate attention to the feeling, humanistic elements of citizenship, and to the needs of ethical decision-making that go beyond scientific empiricism.

At the same time, there is still current in much of the thinking about training social studies teachers the notion that a teacher should, or can, be competent in all of the social sciences (including history), plus be able to teach students to think "critically" about the issues facing our society. The latter ability involves among other things, I presume, being able to model analytic and synthetic thinking.

But do we really believe that teachers are such super-people? A couple of cases:

> Recently, an article published in *Social Education* was purported to be a review of (a set of generalizations from) the research findings in "moral education."[20]

> Yet the article contained no citation of research reports to support the generalizations,[21] of conflicting findings, or of criticisms of the research methodologies and philosophical bases underlying the generalizations.
>
> At the time of its initiation, I was editor of the Research Supplement published in *Social Education*. It was decided to set the Supplement off with different color paper so that it could be easily identified—and avoided by teachers and other readers so that its content would not detract from their interest in the journal.

The hidden meaning of such instances is that teachers aren't interested in research evidence, that they won't or can't check it, that they can't weigh opposing points of view intelligently. If these assumptions are not true, such articles and signals of research reports are insulting and demeaning to teachers. If they are true, where are we? How are teachers to teach students to think critically if they are inclined to avoid evidence or unable to handle evidence and conflicting positions themselves?

Note: The point is not to criticize the author of the "research findings" article or the Editor of *Social Education*. They reflect our professional community. There has not been, for example, any flood of Letters to the Editor objecting to a summary of research lacking citations and critical analysis.

What, then, is the point? It is to indicate another piece of our mindlessness, and to emphasize the need for social studies "professionals" to address the question of how to structure learning experiences (the curriculum) for the broad purposes of citizenship education, in order to capitalize on the knowledge and competencies that individual teachers can reasonably be expected to develop and bring to the teaching situation within the limitations of personality, time, and human intelligence.

## Faddism in Social Studies Education

The mention of the critical orientations (or lack of them) of social studies educators takes me to another concern—the Bandwagon Effect, or faddism, in social studies education. For many years (I can attest from direct experience talking to and working with groups of teachers, supervisors, and college personnel), social studies personnel were too busy with teaching "academic" content to pay much attention to values and valuing as a part of citizenship education. In fact, the "structure of the discipline" approach that dominated most of the curriculum development projects which masqueraded as social studies projects in the 1960s was a fad that exemplified our long standing and unthinking subservience to professors in the academic disciplines.[22]

After having argued for years that values and the use of values in reasoning must be included as essential ingredients of the social studies curriculum, it is with some discomfort that I now find myself having to speak out against recent values education fads. One bandwagon leaped on by many recently is the Values Clarification Approach.[23] This approach, as commonly advocated and used, is pernicious in its anti-intellectualism and its potential for promoting relativism; in its emphasis on the process of clarifying value positions with little attention to whether certain principles (values) might not have special validity, especially in a democratic society; and in its lack of attention to the intellectual standards one might be expected to meet in making decisions about matters of morality.

The Values Clarification Approach is in many ways compatible, unfortunately, with the emphasis in recent years on thinking and rationality, often à la the academic model, and on the rejection of the banal patriotism that many textbooks have contained. But that also makes it part of a pseudo-intellectualism that honors the process of thinking and ignores the importance of commitment, except perhaps the commitment to "truth" in the academic sense, and part of a relativism that has pervaded social studies education to the point that an NCSS committee could write in an early draft document that "[social studies] professionals should not indoctrinate their students with any given form of governance including democracy but should rather place emphasis upon the development of skills in rational processes and decision making" and then go on, inconsistently so it seems to me, to stress the "increased understanding of the responsibilities which democratic citizenship entails." I am not criticizing the committee. I quote from the draft of its work to indicate an unthinking orientation which I frequently find among social studies specialists, an orientation that is basically process-oriented and relativistic, and somewhat confused.

Thinking and rationality are vital to our society. And clarifying one's commitments is important to the analytic thinking that is basic to citizenship in a society that assumes the right of all to participate in governing. But participation is not all analysis. We need, as the Bicentennial should remind us, to readdress the basic principles that make this an unusual, even a marvelous, society—with a government founded self-consciously on a commitment to individual worth and dignity and on the principle, therefore, of government by consent.

Then, there is the newest fad in values education, based on Kohlberg's work[24] in expanding Piaget's seminal thinking on moral development in children.[25] It is labeled "moral education" by some of the disciples. The Moral Development Approach, as it is more appropriately called, is not relativistic. Kohlberg's work is firmly rooted in the democratic ethos, with his declaration of justice as the root principle.

Unfortunately, though, the impression is given (although some of the approach's advocates, such as Larry Kohlberg himself and Ted Fenton, are aware of its limitations) that if one engages students in the discussion of moral dilemmas in hopes of raising their stages of moral reasoning, one has accomplished "moral education." The approach's emphasis on the cognitive structure for moral reasoning leads some to ignore the content of reasoning and to overlook the need for specific reasoning competencies—such as, for making language clear and functional, for evaluating factual claims, for clarifying and weighing conflicting values, for arriving at thoughtfully stated decisions—whatever one's moral stage. The distracting effects of the term "moral education" and the narrow focus on dilemma discussions are unfortunate.

There is not time to review the criticisms of the Moral Development Approach, as there was not for the Values Clarification Approach. And I refer you to sources such as Jack Fraenkel's article in the April, 1976, *Social Education*[26] for the kinds of questions that need to be asked and answered by social studies professionals before jumping on this bandwagon—which is getting amazing nationwide publicity.

However, I do want to note one criticism that I have not run across in the literature. That is, that although the research underlying the Moral Development Approach has followed Piaget's conceptualization, it has not followed his research methodology of observation in natural settings. Instead, interviews and, later, paper-and-pencil tests have been used to assess reactions to several standard moral dilemmas. One can say that, *given the limited data* from the context of interviews or paper-and-pencil tests using a restricted set of moral dilemmas, there do seem to be moral stages: and some stage movement, *as assessed* by the interviews and paper-and-pencil tests, may result from involving students in the discussion of moral dilemmas.

But, do we have the data yet for a sweeping advocacy and adoption of the Moral Development Approach as the basis for citizenship education? I doubt it. And, are social studies personnel adequately aware of the curricular limitations of the approach's orientation? Again, I doubt it.

Are we going to rush into a new fad and then be in the position of Jerome Bruner who, in looking back on the impact of the structure of the disciplines approach he advocated in *The Process of Education*, had to say:

> The movement of which *The Process of Education* was a part was based on a formula of faith: that learning was what students wanted to do, that they wanted to achieve an expertise in some particular subject matter. Their motivation was taken for granted. It also accepted the tacit assumption that everybody who came to these curricula in the schools already had been the beneficiary of the middle-class hidden curricula that taught them analytic skills and launched them in the traditionally intellectual use of mind.

The failure to question these assumptions has, of course, caused much grief to all of us.[27]

## Conclusion

Social studies education is plagued by the continued failure to question assumptions—about moral development and "moral education"; about the dysfunctionality of an approach to values that is inherently relativistic and non-intellectual, if not anti-intellectual; about the importance of commitment to the basic democratic principles that provide the cohesive force for our society and the affective, as well as cognitive, context for debate and argumentation; about the rights of parents, as well as their potentially productive roles as participants in curricular decisions and as extensions of the instructional process; about the role of the social science disciplines and history, and about the extent to which their contents are adequate to the demands of citizenship education; and about the academic orientations that we too often unwittingly allow to dominate our curricular decisions, resulting in ineffective curricula, failure to comprehend the legitimate concerns of parents about instructional programs, and confusion as to the meaning of academic freedom for the public schools; about our unreasonable demands on teachers, on the one hand, and our too frequently condescending, demeaning attitudes toward them, on the other, and about the implications of both for curriculum development. These, and other assumptions, need to be examined to eradicate the mindlessness of social studies education and attain the necessary thoughtfulness, the rationales, to develop citizenship education curricula with scope and sequence and with a space dimension beyond the school into the community and the home. We are, I believe, a long way from that situation. And I wonder: Is it a goal, or is it a dream?

Frankly, I believe that we are being pushed by the force of events to the necessary, and long overdue, examination of our assumptions and to the building of comprehensive, justified rationales. If I were to predict what is likely to happen in social studies in the next fifteen years (as compared to fifteen years ago, when I was hoping for a shift in emphasis from concern with social science data, generalizations, and reasoning to a concern with values and political-ethical decision-making), I would anticipate greater self-awareness and more self-conscious thought about the presumptions from which we develop curricula and teach. But, for that to happen, there will have to be massive self-criticism about questions such as I have raised today, and about others. I hope that we are up to the task; for if we are not, social studies will have a continually diminished role in the schools—and rightly so!

As an emerging professional organization, the National Council for the Social Studies has a central role to play in fostering both the incisive examination of perspectives and the thoughtful conceptualization of rationales for curriculum development and teaching that are essential if social studies education is to be a potent contributor to citizenship. I would like to think that sort of future is ahead for NCSS. I have appreciated the opportunity to serve as President of the Council, and to share with you today a few thoughts and feelings about some issues that I believe we must face.

## Addendum

My assignment for this Presidential Address, which I willingly accepted, was to be critical, in part to set the context for the "Tensions Within the Profession" part of the Annual Meeting. Although my comments focused on shortcomings, I would not want to leave the impression that I believe there are no worthwhile things going on in social studies education. Of course, there are. Moreover, some persons might even say that remarks such as mine are not appropriate for those listening to the Presidential Address at the Annual Meeting (or for those reading it in *Social Education*), because such people are likely to be at the forefront of social studies education. That characterization is, I believe, accurate; but it does not controvert the appropriateness of the remarks.

I would argue that those of us who are professional leaders are a basic part of the problem of mindlessness. We are the roots of the problem. And self-criticism that searches at the very core of what we do is vital. I hope that the critical tone of my remarks will not be used as an excuse to shrug off the basic message: The assumptions underlying much of what we do in social studies education are badly in need of examination. Rationale-building is the major task we face, or ought to face.

## Notes

1. Report of the President to the Board of Directors and the House of Delegates of the National Council for the Social Studies. Washington, D.C., November, 1976. Available from me: College of Education, Utah State University, UMC 28, Logan, UT 84322.

2. For further comments about these efforts, see my Annual Report, *ibid*.

3. As quoted by John T. Whiting in "Does AERA Need a Code of Ethics?", *Educational Researcher*, 1975, 4 (No. 4), 17.

4. Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom*. New York: Random House, 1970, 379.

5. Arthur W. Coombs, "Educational Accountability from a Humanistic Perspective," *Educational Researcher*, 1973, 2 (No. 9), 20.

6. James P. Shaver, "Social Studies: The Need for Redefinition," *Social Education*, 1967, 31, 588-593.

7. Donald W. Oliver and James P. Shaver, *Teaching Public Issues in the High School*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1974 (first published by Houghton Mifflin, 1966).

8. James P. Shaver and A. Guy Larkins, *The Analysis of Public Issues Program*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973-74.

9. Shirley H. Engle, "The Future of Social Studies Education and NCSS," *Social Education*, 1970, 34, 780.

10. For example, one of John Dewey's major arguments was centered on the inappropriateness of imposing content of interest to subject matter specialists. See James P. Shaver, "Needed: A Deweyean Rationale for Social Studies," *The High School Journal*, in press.

11. Lawrence E. Metcalf, "Research on Teaching the Social Studies," in N. L. Gage (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

12. Copies of the Position Statements on Academic Freedom and the Social Studies Teacher can be obtained from the NCSS central office. Also, see *Social Education*, 1974, 39 (April), for a special section on academic freedom (edited by Todd Clark) and for the NCSS Position Statements on the Freedom to Teach and the Freedom to Learn (240) and on Student Rights and Responsibilities (241-245).

13. The confusion is evident in our own committee structure. Some years ago, the name of the NCSS Advisory Committee on Academic Freedom was changed to the Advisory Committee on Freedom to Learn and Freedom to Teach. The change, as I recall, was based on the distinction noted in this sentence. Then, in 1975, at the same time that the committee was given operational status, its name was changed back to the Academic Freedom Committee.

14. Quoted in "Parents vs. Educators: Battle Over What's Taught in Schools," *U.S. News & World Report*, 1976 (July 19), 39.

15. "The MACOS Question: Views of 'Man: A Course of Study' and the Roles of the National Science Foundation and the Federal Government in Curriculum Development and Implementation," *Social Education*, 1975, 39, 445-450.

16. See, for example, Kris McGough, "One Parent's Gut Reaction," *Social Education*, 1976, 40, 607.

17. Quoted in *U.S. News & World Report*, *op. cit.*, 38.

18. In cases such as *Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943) involving freedom of religion, *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969) involving freedom of speech, and *Goss v. Lopez*, 42 L. Ed. (2nd) 725 (1975) involving due process.

19. NCSS now has work underway on a position statement on the democratization of the school and the social studies classroom. See my Annual Report, *op. cit.*

20. Edwin Fenton, "Moral Education: The Research Findings," *Social Education*, 1976, 40, 188-193.

21. Readers were referred to an annotated bibliography elsewhere in the journal.

22. In the 1967 *Social Education* article referred to earlier ("Social Studies: The Need for Redefinition," *op. cit.*), in which I was critical of what I saw happening in "social studies" curriculum development. I coined the term "scholacentrism" to refer to the tendency of scholars to focus too narrowly on their fields in developing curricula. Now I believe another term is needed, "academaphilia," to refer to the unquestioning love of academics by social studies personnel that has led so many, university and public school teachers alike, to accept the scholacentric projects unthinkingly.

23. For the Presidential Address, I assumed that most of the audience would have at least a nodding acquaintance with the Values Clarification Approach. For a list of sources on the approach and a more detailed discussion of it, see James P. Shaver and William

Strong, *Facing Value Decisions: Rationale-building for Teachers*, Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1976, 117-122, 133-135.

24. As with the Value Clarification Approach, I assumed the audience was somewhat familiar with Kohlberg's Moral Development Approach. For references to some of Kohlberg's prolific writing and for a discussion of the approach, see Shaver and Strong, *ibid.*, 122-133, 135-139.

25. Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1932.

26. "The Kohlberg Bandwagon: Some Reservations," *Social Education*, 1976, 40, 216-222. Also, see Shaver and Strong, *op. cit*.

27. Jerome Bruner, *"The Process of Education Revisited," Phi Delta Kappan*, 1971, 52 (Sept.), 19. *The Process of Education* was published by the Harvard University Press in 1960.

# 1977

## "WHEN I SEE MR. JEFFERSON, I'M GOING TO TELL HIM. . ."

*Howard D. Mehlinger*

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**This presidential address was presented on November 18, 1977 to the 57th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Cincinnati, Ohio. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 42 (January 1978): 55-59. ERIC Number: EJ 172 594.**

# 1977

## "When I See Mr. Jefferson, I'm Going to Tell Him. . ."

*Howard D. Mehlinger*

When I was a child, I had a persistent fantasy. I believed that when I died and arrived in heaven—a fate I most assuredly believed I deserved then—I would have to face my grandparents. Oh, I sometimes thought that I would have to square accounts with God, also; but God was a bit too abstract for a small boy to grasp. Nevertheless, I could understand fully what it would mean to confront my grandparents. Not that they were inclined to be mean and vengeful. Quite the contrary! Indeed, they were kind and gentle people who loved me very much; that was part of the problem. They were also clear about their values: they favored enterprise over sloth; truth over falsehood; honesty over dishonesty; respect over disrespect; and polite language over obscenity. Somehow I knew they were watching and judging me. And while I always said my nightly prayers to God and recognized that somehow or other He was in charge, I was more apprehensive about the judgment of my grandparents. Whenever I violated any of the values they held dear, I could see them in my imagination, clucking to their friends in whatever languages angels use: "Tsk, tsk—and Howard was once such a good boy!"

I no longer think very much about my grandparents—perhaps to my discredit—but throughout this year I have had a similar fantasy about Thomas Jefferson. Since January, I have been asked often to speak about and to write on citizen education. Citizenship has been cited as the main priority for NCSS; this convention program was built around an exploration of the social studies teacher's role in the education of citizens. And so I have wondered from time to time: What if I were to die suddenly and encounter Thomas Jefferson? Suppose that Jefferson, with his concern for the future of the Republic and his recognition of the vital role of citizen education to guarantee the Republic's future, were to ask me to account for the current practice of citizenship in the United States and for the quality of citizen education for youth. What questions would he ask? What answers would I provide? In my fantasy three questions have seemed most important. These questions and my answers are the substance of this address. The questions are:

1. Do Americans still believe in the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence?
2. What do Americans think about their government?
3. What is being done to prepare American youth to assume roles as responsible adult citizens?

### Do Americans Still Believe in the Principles Enunciated in the Declaration of Independence?

What are the principles to which our founders pledged their "Lives," their "Fortunes," and their "sacred Honor"? Nearly everyone in this room knows these word by memory:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

What a simple but powerful statement this is! It matters not that the ideas were borrowed by those drafting the Declaration of Independence. The literate public of the time was fully familiar with the ideas of John Locke and other philosophers of the Enlightenment whence the ideas, if not the precise language, came. What is breathtaking is that these people 200 years ago believed fervently that such ideas could become more than mere intellectual abstractions. These ideas could become practical guidelines for managing the political affairs of a nation.

What would I tell Jefferson if he asked me whether Americans continued to believe in these principles? Surely, I would want to discuss the world-wide spread of the "right to revolution" principle and of Americans' occasional ambivalence toward the idea when a specific political revolution appears to conflict with United States' national interests. I would note that the belief that the people are the source of legitimate political authority is cherished world-wide in principle and often violated in practice. I would indicate that the growing secularization of American society has made many Americans skeptical that the Creator had much to do with their "unalienable rights," but nearly all would agree that the rights were due them in any case. And I suppose that I would try to avoid shocking Jefferson while informing him that for a growing number of Americans the right to "pursue happiness" has been perverted to a commitment to hedonism.

But above all, I would want Jefferson to know what has become of the most perplexing of the revolutionary ideas found in the Declaration of Independence: "all men are created equal." For Jefferson and his colleagues, this simple notion meant primarily that aristocracy was unwelcome in the United States. Success in life would rest on personal achievement, not upon who one's parents and ancestors were. America was to be a land of opportunity—insofar as possible, one of equal opportunity—where a person with talent and willingness to work hard would be recognized and rewarded.

We can be charitable of our founders' blind spots. When Jefferson wrote that "all men are created equal," he most assuredly did not include women, nor did he include all males for that matter. Indians, blacks, and non-property holders were among those who were not given equal status. Therefore, I would be proud to tell Jefferson that we have enlarged and improved on the equality principle. Gradually, but persistently, we have lowered the legal barriers that prevent equality of opportunity. While we cannot and should not become complacent about the current situation, neither need we feel shame. From the perspective of history as well as from a current world view, the United States is among the most—if not the pre-eminent—socially mobile society in the history of humankind. It is not that there are no obstacles that inhibit social mobility; but the barriers are lower and more easily crossed than in nearly any other society, and the trend is toward further lowering rather than the reverse. Americans generally accept people for who they are and what they have accomplished and only secondarily worry about their family or other social connections.

Among our constellation of political beliefs, our commitment to equality glows the brightest. De Tocqueville recognized this more than one hundred years ago, when he wrote in *Democracy in America*:

> I think that democratic communities have a natural taste for freedom; left to themselves, they will seek it, cherish it, and view any privation of it with regret. But for equality their passion is ardent, insatiable, incessant, invincible; they call for equality in freedom; and if they cannot obtain that, they still call for equality in slavery. They will endure poverty, servitude, barbarism, but they will not endure aristocracy.[1]

The passion for equality has not grown less since De Tocqueville. If anything, it is greater. Nearly every major domestic political debate has an equality issue at its heart. Even a partial listing should make the point: the Equal Rights Amendment, busing of school children, Title IX, welfare reform, even the decline in SAT scores coupled with "grade inflation."

As the legal barriers preventing one group from competing fairly with another have been toppled one by one, attention has begun to swing from a focus on equality of opportunity to equality of outcomes. It was perhaps natural for this to occur. If one believes that the principal reason certain groups are not represented in occupational and decision-making roles according to their proportions to the population as a whole is because of discriminatory practices, what does such a person conclude when in the absence of legal barriers employment results remain disproportionate? It is not typical of social reformers to assign blame (or credit) to individuals for their station in life. Somehow the society remains at fault. Perhaps the disadvantaged groups are suffering from residues of past discrimination; maybe it is a question of poor self concept; and so on.

The response has been to seek compensatory remedies. We have instituted affirmative action procedures, established employment targets, and created quotas. Beginning in 1969 with the Philadelphia plan that required construction unions to admit more blacks as apprentices, laws, regulations, and guidelines have been written in order to promote equality of outcomes. It is no longer necessary to prove that a particular institution—e.g., a business school—has been discriminatory in recruiting new employees. The fact that there are no women, blacks, or Chicanos on its faculty is sufficient evidence. It must choose its next employees from among the disadvantaged groups or show cause why it was unable to do so.

How far are we prepared to go to assure equality of outcomes? In horse racing, bowling, and golf, it is common to give a handicap to the best in order to make a more interesting contest, to make the outcome more equitable. The Federal Civil Service has long awarded points to veterans applying for civil service jobs, as a recognition for past service to the nation and as a way of ensuring that veterans are given preference. Should women, blacks, Chicanos or other groups also be given such advantages?

No one wishes to support customs, practices, and laws that prevent equality of opportunity. To the extent that such impediments to fair competition remain, they should be eliminated. But at what point does the concern for equality of outcomes prevent equality of opportunity? At what point does the desire to set target figures for group representation on a statistical basis for the nation as a whole intrude on the freedom of individual Americans? How should I answer Jefferson?

## What Do Americans Think about Their Government?

The Declaration of Independence announced to the world the principles upon which the United States would be based, but it did not provide the structure for making certain that the principles would be put into effect. This remained the job of those who wrote the Constitution.

A republic—that's what the founders wanted. They shared a general belief that people could be trusted to rule themselves. In his first inaugural address, Jefferson declared: "Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he then be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the form of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question."

But republic or monarchy, Jefferson believed that political power was dangerous and that any government should be prevented from acquiring too much of it. Government was a necessary evil: necessary to preserve order, to protect property, and to guarantee contracts. But governments always sought to enlarge their authority and to intrude upon personal liberties.

The chosen solution was to make the basis of all authority a fundamental law—the Constitution—that could be changed only by the people. Within the limits set by the Constitution, elected representatives were free to pass legislation and to carry out the necessary tasks of government. By prescribing which duties were to be fulfilled by the Federal government and reserving the rest to the states and to the people, the framers sought to prevent the excessive build-up of power in the central government. Through a system of checks and balances they sought to diffuse power among the three branches. "That government is best that governs least" wrote Jefferson. The majority agreed with him and tried to create a structure that would permit the government to meet its minimum responsibilities and no more.

What shall I tell Jefferson about what has happened to government? Will he be surprised to learn that the small government he found ideal has grown to mammoth proportions: that nearly one-fifth of the total adult work force is employed by local, state, and Federal government; that employment in the public sector has more than doubled in the past 20 years; that a typical schoolteacher works one and a quarter days each week to pay taxes to support various governments?

Has the growth in government and the services it provides increased the popularity of government for citizens? Apparently not. Pollsters have recorded a steady erosion in public confidence in government over the past 20 years. In 1958 the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research found 20 percent of the American people interviewed to be distrustful of political authority; by 1976 the proportion of citizens feeling distrust had risen to more than 50 percent. The Louis Harris polls show that confidence in the executive branch of the Federal government slipped from 41 percent to 23 percent between 1966 and 1977, while confidence in Congress during the same period fell from 42 percent to 17 percent.[2]

It seems apparent that growth in the size and power of government have not been matched by an increase in respect, trust, and prestige. Indeed, as the government's size and power has grown, its appeal has waned. How can one account for this? Surely, one explanation is the gross abuse of political power and the encroachment on personal liberties exhibited by certain recent public figures. Jefferson would not be surprised this has occurred; he predicted it. But I believe the source of discontent is not fully explained by the peccadillos of individuals; public distrust and alienation is unfortunately a by-product of the modern set of assumptions we have accepted regarding the proper role for government in our society.

Jefferson foresaw a very limited role for government. At a time when the economy was characterized by small shopkeepers and farmers, he and his peers were committed to principles of *laissez faire* economics. We may have forgotten that Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776, the same year as the Declaration of Independence; it affected people's economic views as the Declaration of Independence influenced political beliefs. Thomas Babington Macaulay, the great British historian, may have summarized the attitudes of Jefferson and others of the period best:

> Our rulers will best promote the improvement of the nation by strictly confining themselves to their own legitimate duties, by leaving capital to find its own most lucrative course, commodities their fair price, industry and intelligence their natural reward, idleness and folly their natural punishment, by maintaining peace, by defending property, by diminishing the price of law, and by observing strict economy in every department of the state. Let the government do this: the people will assuredly do the rest.[3]

Whether this attitude about the proper role of government could have proved successful, we shall never know, because the nation did not remain a country of farmers and small shopkeepers. The Industrial Revolution took care of that, and instead of the type of *laissez faire* economics that Jefferson desired, the nation experienced the growth of large corporations, of monopoly and oligopoly, and of unions to protect workers against the enormous power of banks and large industries. Farmers and small shopkeepers, playing according to the old rules, found themselves operating at a disadvantage. World War I, with the need to focus the economy on wartime priorities, and the Great Depression brought to a close whatever chance there may have been for the government to play a minor role in the economic life of the nation.

Today, all levels of government—local, state, and national—function in at least two ways that are contradictory to Jefferson's ideals and probably beyond his ability to imagine. First, the government is seen as a necessary balance wheel for the economic system. Secondly, by its rules and regulations the government intrudes into our lives in a way wholly inconsistent with Jefferson's notions of a limited government. Each of these deserves an additional comment or two.

The United States is still described by such phrases as "capitalist nation" and "bastion of the free enterprise system." This is a splendid example of conceptual lag: the reality has changed but people continue to use traditional labels whether they fit or not. The fact is that the United States has a very mixed economy with a steadily growing sector that might be termed state capitalism. The Great Depression killed whatever appetite most Americans had left for a *laissez faire* economy. Not only workers and farmers, but bankers and businessmen demanded protection from the fury of the marketplace. What gradually evolved is a system in which major economic decisions are treated as if they are political decisions. Interest group politics determines the outcome of many economic decisions. For example, the marketplace would probably have eliminated most small farms decades ago. But because government found such a solution politically unacceptable, it created various economic props in order that some independent farmers could survive. The defense budget must respond not only to the realities of world politics but also to the need for maintaining employment in shipyards, air bases, and defense-related industries in every state of the nation. Nearly everyone, except perhaps the military, is opposed to large defense budgets in principle, but few can be found to vote in favor of closing down specific plants, factories, bases, and shipyards that provide employment and that make the defense budget what it is.

The effect of government's role in the economy is pernicious for the relationship of citizens to their government. An ever-increasing share of personal income is diverted to support the public sector. Meanwhile, citizens as individuals and as members of groups are free to try to reclaim some of it for their own special interests. Thus, civilian defense workers pay taxes so that the government will provide defense jobs that enable them to pay taxes, thereby completing the circle. But few citizens are happy with their share of the total pie, and few relish the client relationship this forces them to adopt with their government. Teachers resent the money spent on defense because they think it deprives schools of adequate funds. Rural people resent subsidies for urban centers; city dwellers resent price supports for farmers—and so it goes. This system also has an eroding effect on the independence of the citizen. Increasingly, we have come to believe that little can be accomplished unless the government starts a program and provides financial support. This was brought home forcefully to me this summer. While working with a group of people planning needed reforms in citizen education, I was struck by how often individuals felt that little could be done to strengthen citizenship until leadership was provided by the Federal government. (I'm not looking forward to explaining that argument to Jefferson.)

Finally, the role of government as regulator has grown. We ask government to protect us from nearly everything, but especially from our human tendency to be lazy and stupid. Wherever there is a problem, government must solve it. We will soon have air bags in our cars to protect us from crashing into our auto dashboards in the event of front-end accidents. Never mind that the great majority of us will never have such an accident, that the bags may not work when we need them, and that it will add several hundred dollars to the cost of an automobile. Someone believes the government should make sure that fewer people die in head-on collisions, and Congress will surely say yes because it is easier than saying no and being made to appear as favoring death by auto accident.

Recently, I came across a problem that has been largely overlooked until now. It is a health affliction called "café coronary." Elderly people and children under four are especially vulnerable. "Café coronaries" claim 3,500 lives each year, making it the sixth leading cause of accidental death. It strikes quickly without warning while a person is eating. Indeed, the cause of death is a victim sucking a piece of solid food, usually meat, into the opening of the larynx when the victim inhales at the wrong moment. The food blocks the larynx and the windpipe, causing the victim to choke to death.

One might argue that this is a scandalous situation, calling for new government regulations. Think of the 3,500 lives that are snuffed out each year, prematurely, because of this dread occurrence. Perhaps government could require that meat be sold in small, bite-sized morsels only. Perhaps children under four could be permitted to eat meat only under parental supervision. Perhaps signs could be posted in restaurants, announcing that people are requested not to talk with their mouths full, and that people will not be served drinks with their meals until after they have eaten their meat.

Such measures could reduce significantly the number of people who die each year by choking on meat.

You may find my illustration to be silly, and perhaps it is, although there is probably a reformer somewhere who will find my arguments for the regulation of meat consumption compelling. The point is that regulation of this kind affects the relationship of the citizen to his government. As a price for presumed increased levels of security and happiness, citizens accept greater encroachments on their personal liberty. They also sense their declining range of freedom and resent it. Moreover, nearly every regulation makes some people very unhappy, as recent controversies over controls on saccharine and laetrile make clear. Other regulations disappoint nearly everyone concerned, as for example the effort by the Federal Aviation Administration to establish the maximum level of jet noise to be tolerated near airports.

But perhaps the main point is that by attempting to "do good"—i.e., by taking stress out of the economy, redistributing wealth, guaranteeing employment, providing minimal financial security, and by regulating our lives so as to extend our health and safety—government can no longer be treated with trust and confidence by many Americans. Its power over our lives is so great and our capacity to influence its various decisions so limited, that it must inevitably be treated with suspicion and distrust.

### What is Being Done to Prepare American Youth to Assume Roles as Responsible Adult Citizens?

Like the Greeks, Jefferson believed that a person's principal vocation was citizenship and preparation for that vocation a society's chief concern. Jefferson thought that the Republic's future success depended upon a well-informed electorate. Writing to William C. Jarvis in September, 1820, Jefferson noted:

> I know no safe repository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.[4]

How was citizen education for youth to be achieved? In Jefferson's time, as well as ours, this responsibility was shared. The family, churches, and newspapers were important factors 200 years ago and remain so today, although the influence of both the family and church has been greatly undermined in recent years. Of course, Jefferson could not have predicted the cultural impact of television, radio, and movies; nor could he have foreseen the degree to which peer associations among youth would challenge parental authority.

Jefferson believed that schools had a vital role to play in the citizen preparation of young people and undertook a number of measures to make school instruction more widely available. Education for citizenship has remained a central purpose of American schooling, although this fact is sometimes overlooked. Some educators may even have forgotten that two of the "seven cardinal principles" set forth in the 1918 Report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education were "citizenship" and "ethical character."

Citizen education appears to be experiencing a revival today after nearly two decades of decline. In the late 1940s and early 1950s a particular brand of citizen education was dominant. Prompted by a "cold war" mentality and McCarthyism, schools were under extensive pressure to inculcate the glories of our political culture in contrast to the bad features of the Soviet system. The cause of citizen education was not advanced by the narrow kind of chauvinism that resulted; it left citizen education with a bad reputation among progressive educators.

The curriculum reform movement prompted by Sputnik in the late 1950s and early 1960s had little time for citizen education. Young people were trained for scholarly roles. Stress was placed upon mastering the "structures" of the disciplines and the inquiry techniques of academic specialists. While the events of the late 1960s and early 1970s undermined the excessively academic nature of curriculum reforms, they also encouraged a kind of narcissistic personalism equally incompatible with citizen education. The youth culture invited students to "drop out," to find satisfaction through personal pleasure, to live for today and to forget the future, and to take care of themselves because others would not. These attitudes, coupled with the anger expressed toward the American military action in Vietnam, detracted from building the sense of community on which citizenship depends.

Within the past year and a half, several events have marked a resurgence of interest in citizen education. These events include:

- A national conference on "Education and Citizenship: Responsibilities for the Common Good," sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education in Kansas City, Missouri, in September, 1976.
- The publication of *Education for Responsible Citizenship*, the report of a National Task Force on Citizenship Education sponsored by the Danforth and Kettering Foundations (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977).
- The formation of an Alliance for Citizen Education in Philadelphia in June, 1977.

- A statement by the Chief State School Officers calling for renewed attention to citizen education.
- Numerous programs and activities of the National Council for the Social Studies, including co-sponsorship of a national conference on the theme "Education for National Citizenship Through a Global Lens," held in Chautauqua, New York in August, 1977, and the recent publication of a bulletin entitled *Building Rationales for Citizenship Education* (1977).

Once again citizen education appears on the list of priorities for American education. This time we must watch that citizen education is not captured by the jingoists who would use it to build political support for their own domestic and foreign policies. Nor can we permit it to be buried by the cynics, who, under the banner of critical thinking, derive satisfaction by undermining respect for traditional values and destroying the human need for identification and commitment. Nor can we once again let the demand for "rights," which are our due, drown out the appeal for "responsibility" which makes these rights possible.

## Contributions of the Social Studies

I have tried to think how I would answer Jefferson should he ask me what special contribution the social studies is making to citizen education. Within schools we have no monopoly on citizen education. Other subjects make contributions; the school governance system models elements of the political system; and the extracurricular program provides opportunities for reinforcement as well as initial learning of citizen skills. Yet, the social studies above and beyond all other subjects and aspects of the school has a unique responsibility for citizen education. And, if the preparation of citizens is a principal purpose of schools, then social studies is as assuredly basic education as are mathematics and reading, and we should not hesitate to say so.

If Jefferson had the time, I would fill him with information about social studies programs and projects underway in American schools. I would also inform him about recent NCSS publications on citizenship, about the work of its various committees that bear on citizen education concerns, and about this conference that has attracted social studies educators from all parts of the nation to reflect on the proper role of the social studies teacher in citizen education. However, I have a hunch that life may be as hectic in heaven as on earth, and that Jefferson may only have time to seek my opinion about what most needs to be done now to strengthen citizen education in the schools. Faced with this choice, I would want to discuss three issues.

*Need for conceptual frameworks.* The first deals with the Tower of Babel we have constructed for citizen education. For the past decade and a half, curriculum reformers have been led by a project mentality. On the assumption that citizen education will be improved by increasing the range of tested alternatives available to schools, project directors have sought to isolate discrete instructional problems and to devise tested solutions to these problems. The result has been a plethora of new programs in law-related education, global education, consumer education, political education, values education, moral education, and so on. The project directors have not accepted responsibility for how their work fits with others under development. Deciding how to integrate the various programs has been left to school officials.

In one sense this strategy has been remarkably successful. The inventory of instructional materials and ideas for citizen education is large and growing steadily. Schools have more choices and the quality is better than before. But missing are comprehensive plans providing alternative paths for schools wishing to use these materials and others in effective ways from kindergarten through high school. It is as though we had a supermarket of fine products but no menus to plan excellent and nourishing meals suitable to individual tastes.

A compelling present need is to devise comprehensive citizen education programs that are grounded in philosophical views about human nature, that will satisfy local community concerns, and that draw as much as possible upon available instructional materials. While the need for additional curriculum development is likely to continue, higher priority should be given to helping schools make better use of available products within carefully considered citizen education frameworks.[5]

*Need for perspective-taking.* A second issue is how to increase student capacity for perspective-taking, i.e., a capacity to see the world from the point of view of another. Let me offer a current illustration of what I mean. I have been amused by discussions I have held with adults regarding world-wide shortages in food and petroleum. These Americans have tended to describe the problem in the following way. With regard to food, they see the United States, a principal world supplier of food, as free to use its resources in any way it chooses. "We grow it; it's ours; we can do with it what we want—store it, sell it, give it away, destroy it or whatever we choose. We can also use it as bait to persuade the Soviet government to change some of its most offensive policies. The point is that the food is ours, and we can do what we want with it."

These same people see the fuel crisis somewhat differently. They say: "Just because the oil is pumped from ground within Arab states does not mean that they can do whatever they please with the oil. We need it; our industrial society depends upon cheap oil. We can pay for it; they should sell it to us; and they have no right to use it as a political weapon to influence our policies toward Israel." The inconsistency of their opinions does not occur to them.

A capacity for perspective-taking is essential if we are to resolve the most perplexing citizen task before us: rebuilding a sense of community. Lack of shared concern is a major factor leading to the destruction of urban neighborhoods. It lies behind the growth of youth crime in the United States. And our inability to create a sense of world community surely imperils our very life on this planet.

Moreover, the development of political participation skills, such as bargaining and negotiation, is thwarted when students are unable to see beyond their own perspective and desires and to understand the position of the other party. Citizen education must help students acquire a capacity to see the world from many perspectives: from inside as well as outside, from the underside and the topside, from "our side" and "their side."

*Need for ideals.* A third issue deals with the need for commitment. More than 15 centuries ago, St. Jerome wrote:

> Shame on us, the world is falling in ruins, but our sins still flourish. The glorious city that was head of the Roman Empire has been engulfed in one terrific blaze. There is no part of the earth where exiles from Rome are not to be found. Churches once held sacred have fallen into dust and ashes, and still we set our hearts greedily on money. We live as though we were doomed to death on the morrow, but we build houses as though we were going to live forever in this world. Our walls glitter with gold, gold gleams upon our ceilings and upon the capitals of our pillars; yet Christ is dying at our doors in the persons of His poor, naked and hungry—Flocks and shepherds perish together, because the priest is now even as the people.[6]

When ideals fade, either in the time of St. Jerome or in our own, people resort to hedonism, living by taste and desire while seeking to squeeze every ounce of pleasure from the immediate present. Meaning and commitment are replaced by frivolousness and boredom. To have deep convictions and strong principles is to mark one as a little odd, certainly naive. Cynicism and skepticism invade people's lives to sap their energies and destroy their missions.

Citizen education must be more than merely learning about the operation of the political system and acquiring skills that enable people to wring out decisions favorable to their personal advantage. Citizenship implies shared beliefs, goals, and purposes. A sense of citizenship should draw upon the most worthy motives lying buried within human beings.

Citizenship should inspire people to pursue goals that bring advantage to society as a whole while adding meaning and richness to their own lives.

To what extent do social studies teachers today treat this aspect of citizenship? My impression is that analysis has replaced dedication. As compared to the past, much less attention is devoted to an understanding of principles upon which this nation was founded or upon the beliefs that have motivated many great figures in history. Indeed, we show less concern for the substance of values and rather more concern for the process of valuing. Compared to our predecessors, we worry far less that our youth might fail to become committed to the fundamental values of our society and far more that they will lack suitable bases for the personal choices they have made or be unhappy with the results. One consequence of this emphasis is that students gain more experience in sorting out choices that affect them personally and less opportunity to ponder questions that affect society as a whole. A citizen education that increases the capacity of citizens to act without also informing their purposes is dangerous.

## Conclusion

To Jefferson and his peers the problem was how to construct a new society born of revolution, a society committed to certain beliefs about the proper relationship between the citizen and the state. Their ideas spread around the globe to inspire people for over two centuries. Despite any imperfections these ideals may have exhibited in practice, they have survived. And they are as relevant today as when they were first proclaimed.

In 1977 Americans face different problems from those confronting Jefferson. No longer are we worried about taming a wilderness or finding a way to weld together thirteen diverse states into a single nation. We are no longer a small power resisting domination by superpowers. We have become the richest, most powerful nation in the history of humankind. Yet, we face problems both domestic and foreign that stretch the capacity of our citizens to respond. Americans are being tested today, as in the past. We need the courage, imagination, will, energy, and idealism that characterized the founders. The task of citizen education is to prepare Americans who are capable of responding to challenges both at home and abroad.

Abraham Lincoln once said: "It is in your hands, fellow citizens, that the future of the Republic rests." I would like to tell Thomas Jefferson, when I see him, that social studies educators have extended their hands and accept their responsibility.

## Notes

1. Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*, Vol. II. New York: Vintage Books, 1945, 102-103.

2. *New York Times*, June 12, 1977, 55.

3. Quoted in E. H. Carr. *The New Society*. London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd., 1951, 21.

4. Quoted in *Crusade Against Ignorance: Thomas Jefferson on Education*. Ed. by Gordon C. Lee. New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, 1961, 17.

5. This section is based upon ideas contained in my unpublished paper entitled "How Can We Improve Citizen Education for American Youth," presented at the National Conference on "Education and Citizenship: Responsibilities for the Common Good," September 22, 1976.

6. Quoted in John H. Schaar. *Escape from Authority: The Perspectives of Erich Fromm*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1961, 288-289.

# 1978

## CENSORSHIP: DOES ANYBODY CARE?

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This presidential address was presented on November 17, 1978 to the 58th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Houston, Texas. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 43 (April 1979): 304-309. ERIC Number: EJ 198 695.

# 1978

## Censorship: Does Anybody Care?

*Anna S. Ochoa*

The topic of my speech is not new but it is persistent. Attempts to censor from one vantage point or another have been—and I think it is safe to predict—will always be with us. Censorship movements wax and wane, but their candle is never entirely snuffed out. Perhaps in a democracy, which permits freedom of expression, this condition is as it should be.

However, in the late seventies the problem appears especially acute. In several ways we are, though perhaps inadvertently, part of the problem. For, during the 1970s social studies educators have embraced a variety of new interests that have bombarded classrooms from many directions. These activities can be subsumed under various labels: multicultural education, consumer education, global education, law-related education, moral (values) education, action learning, etc. Some of these areas have been, and are, targets of the censors. While moving in these many directions, we have, I think, failed to pay attention to the forces eroding the quality of education. Responsible innovative efforts are terribly important, but ignoring the climate of classrooms, schools, and communities is counter-productive to any serious educator.

That dissonant points of view have a right to see the light of day cannot be questioned. Whether all points of view have an equal claim to control the quality and nature of the educational experience is quite another matter, however.

In my remarks this morning, I would like to focus on three points:

1. the first is to highlight the nature and extent of censorship currently;
2. the second is to summarize the status of the rights of teachers; and
3. the third is to focus on what needs to be done by educators and schools and by this professional association.

In preparing for this presentation, I read a book entitled *The Censors and the Schools*. Published in 1963, the book traces the history of censorship struggles in school settings from the 1920s onward. It was especially disturbing to find that, except for two references to our journal, *Social Education*, there was no mention of the National Council for the Social Studies. It seems we played no significant part, or perhaps no part at all, in a struggle that managed to tap the conscience of such organizations as the National Education Association, the American Library Association, and National Council of Teachers of English. In a field concerned with controversy, it would seem that knowledge of First Amendment rights and censorship issues would be part of the stock and trade of all who teach the social studies. I can only ask: Where were we for 40 years?

Turning first to the nature and extent of censorship, I would like to organize my remarks around the following questions:

*Who is censoring?*
*What is being censored and why?*
*Where is it happening?*

An oversimplified, but not inaccurate, response to these questions is "everybody, everything, everywhere." However, these are global answers. Let me be more specific.

## Who Is Censoring?

First, who is censoring? For me, this question divides into two parts: (a) Who attempts to censor? and (b) Who actually censors? Among those who attempt to censor, a most significant voice is an organization called Education Research Analysts. It is operated out of Longview, Texas by two self-styled textbook analysts: Mel and Norma Gabler. It is estimated that they have a budget of about $150,000 per year.[1] They produce reviews of textbooks that have appeared in many places throughout the country. As consultants to pro-censorship groups, they have personally visited Kanawha County, West Virginia; New Orleans, Louisiana; and St. Paul/Minneapolis, Minnesota. In general, they find many instructional materials to be anti-Christian and anti-American. Specifically, they offer the following statement as a description of their commitment: "Until textbooks are changed, there is absolutely no chance that crime, violence, VD and abortion rates will do anything but climb."[2] I would like to provide a few examples of what they object to.

1. In the Justice and Urban America Series (Houghton Mifflin), Norma Gabler objected to an over-emphasis on lawbreaking, violence, prejudice and poverty. She noted that the word "poverty" was used 168 times in one of the eight volumes which happened to be entitled *Poverty and Welfare*. She further objected to the presentation of a welfare application form in this volume, charging that the material did not encourage individual initiative to find work.[3]

2. In Macmillan's *Search for Freedom*, a fifth-grade text, Mrs. Gabler called attention to the fact that six and one-half pages were devoted to Marilyn Monroe while George Washington was only mentioned five times. She concluded her testimony to the Texas Education Agency with a question that received international press attention, "Is Texas ready for Marilyn to become the mother of our country?"[4]

3. In *Inquiries into Sociology* (Allyn and Bacon), two of the issues the Gablers focused on were moral permissiveness and a disproportionate emphasis on parent-youth conflict. The material, they observed, approved of telling of white lies which the Gablers interpret as situational ethics. They further argued that the following passage exaggerated the tensions between parents and youth: "Unintended functions of the family may be to extend the period of dependency too long, and to imprint the child, often unconsciously, with the parents' prides, passions and prejudices."[5]

4. For Prentice-Hall's *Behind the Mark: Our Psychological World*, the Gablers submitted an eighteen-page bill of particulars. One objection was to the following statement: "This process is called sex role development and that means that we are trained gradually in the ways of behavior as a male or female. Put another way, we learn how to be a man and a woman sexually and adopt that role—as if we were in a play—until that role becomes second nature." The Gablers added that "this theory rejects God who stated that He made us male and female. You are either a male or a female and there is no way to get around it."[6]

The Gablers and their supporters have a variety of targets.

1. Adolescent Novels—ones that deal with the problems adolescents face—whether they focus on drugs, juvenile delinquency, or sex.

2. Realistic Dialogue—here the target is substandard English. The Gablers fear that reading such dialect is a way of teaching students to use it.

3. Works by Questionable Writers—e.g., Langston Hughes, Malcolm X, Joan Baez, Ogden Nash.

4. Books by those considered to be homosexual authors—Emily Dickinson, Tennessee Williams, Walt Whitman, Gore Vidal, John Milton, and Hans Christian Andersen.

5. Another category is books they describe as trash. Included here are such titles as *Native Son, Catcher in the Rye,* and *Soul on Ice.*

A sixth category is teaching methods that represent secular humanism, which the protesters see as a set of ideas that denigrate family, church, and country. Seventh are materials about ethnic studies and drug education. Eighth is role playing. Ninth, the absence of grammar rules. Tenth, materials that make negative statements about parents. Eleventh is phase elective English programs, and twelfth is sex education.[7]

Even though the examples given have applied to the middle and secondary school levels, elementary titles are becoming increasingly vulnerable. Whether in the form of textbooks or library books, elementary materials are becoming increasingly realistic.

In addition to the Gablers' organization, there are other national as well as state organizations. The Heritage Foundation, America's Future, Citizens for Decent Literature, the Hard Core Parents of Louisiana, the National Parents League, the Oklahoma Parents for God and Country, Parents Who Care in Maryland, represent a few examples. These pro-censorship groups are well heeled and well organized.

By contrast, the educational community has not had a parallel organization. So far I have placed heavy emphasis on the organized censorship movement because evidence of it is pervasive. However, I do not mean to suggest that there are not individuals, be they parents or not, who do not act independently of the movement.

Further, I have been describing censorship from the conservative side. I'd also like to speak to censorship from the liberal perspective. Racial groups, ethnic groups, and women's groups have also called for the removal of certain books from schools, libraries, and classrooms. *Little Black Sambo* is probably the best known example, but there are many others. This, too, is censorship; and let me submit that there is no such thing as good censorship—not if we value freedom of the mind—there isn't. In this instance, I'd like to make a distinction between the selection of curriculum materials such as textbooks on the one hand and library and supplementary materials on the other. If the curriculum of a school aims to strengthen certain core democratic values, such as freedom and equality, as it seems to me it should, then it seems perfectly logical to select text materials that reflect those values. However, adherence to such values—especially that of freedom—requires that we leave all the books on the library shelves. None of us would argue that *Mein Kampf* or *The Communist*

*Manifesto* should be removed (at least I hope none of us would so argue). Yet these books represent repugnant ideas to many. We do not have to look back too many years to find an account of the removal of a children's book called *The Rabbit's Wedding*. The story is about two rabbits who play together and enjoy one another. In the great tradition of many children's stories, the book has a "lived happily ever after" ending. The rabbits were married. However, from the standpoint of those who would censor, there was a problem. One rabbit was black and the other white. The conservatives, who succeeded in having the book censored, found the story to be a symbol of miscegenation. I use this example to illustrate the concept of tyranny of the majority. In this case, those in power, ignoring respect for minority rights, used their power to control the minds of children. Right-wing racists felt that they had the right to exercise their power by removing this book. This illustration emphasizes that in a democracy majority rule must be balanced with minority rights. It is important to remember that today's majority may well be tomorrow's minority. If power, rather than respect for rights, prevails, dictatorship, not democracy, exists. For a democracy, it is imperative that we understand that the group in power is transient, but that the principles of the system must be persistent.

Censorship attempts, then, come from different political camps, various socioeconomic groups, varying religious denominations, and both sexes.

If these groups are the ones who attempt to censor, then who actually censors? The actual censor has to be a person or group that has authority. In 1976, Mel and Norma Gabler were successful in influencing the removal of several dictionaries from schools throughout the state of Texas. The dictionaries, in their view, contained a number of obscene words. The Gablers protested the use of the dictionaries, as did other parents. But they are not the censors. A censor can be a state board of education, a superintendent of schools, a principal, a school board, a teacher, or a librarian. When any of these authorities give in to the demands of protesters and remove books, put them in special collections, cut out pages or passages, darken the controversial parts of an illustration—they are censoring. It may seem unusual to include some teachers and librarians on this list of censors; nonetheless, it is accurate. Further, such action often takes place without a request or directive that a book be removed. As soon as news spreads that parents are protesting a book in one location, that book may silently disappear from use in several other places. One of the typical consequences of a censorship incident is that self-censorship runs rampant.

A word about publishers. In responding to protesters, publishers have been valiant in their efforts to diffuse the attack and diminish its strength.

Nonetheless, if the attack persists they often agree to make the desired changes. States that have centralized adoption procedures are especially threatened. To lose the state adoption in large states such as Florida, California, or Texas involves a cost that is too high for publishers to pay. In states that are open territory where decisions are made by local school districts, the situation is far less threatening, and pre-publication censorship is not as likely to occur.

At this point, I hope I've made clear why it is fair to respond to the questions raised earlier—Who censors? What is censored? Where is it taking place?—with "Everybody, everything, and everywhere."

I think it is now appropriate to ask: "What rights do teachers have anyway?" "Or principals or superintendents or school boards?" "Why do they give in?" "Isn't the law on their side?"

## Significant Cases on Academic Freedom

First of all, there is no specific law or constitutional provision that guarantees academic freedom. What we have is the First Amendment; and the Supreme Court has, from time to time, affirmed that academic freedom is a form of free speech and free expression. The first instance of such a court ruling occurred as recently as 1923. Up until then, academic freedom was only a tradition that applied exclusively to universities and not to precollegiate education, where students are less mature and where the emphasis is on transmitting rather than discovering knowledge.

There are several important cases through which the courts have set some legal precedent. I would like to review a few major ones briefly.

1. The Keefe Case, Ipswich, Massachusetts, 1969. Keefe was an English teacher who assigned an article from the *Atlantic Monthly*. The article contained a vulgar term. While students didn't react negatively, some parents did. When asked not to use the term again in class, Keefe said that he could not, in good conscience, agree. He was notified that he would be dismissed and went to court to stop the dismissal. The judge in the case found the article to be a scholarly one and not obscene. He further observed that the use of the term was central to the theme and that most seniors knew the term anyway. He concluded that the "sensibilities of offended parents are not the full measure of what is proper in education." He also made it clear that his decision did not give blanket approval to the use of offensive language. Whether it is proper, he stated, depends on the circumstances.

2. In fact, in another case in Massachusetts in 1971, the U.S. District Court decided the matter differently. In Mailloux vs. Kiley, an 11th-grade teacher was dismissed for using a variation of the same term used by Keefe. Admitting that under certain circumstances, the use of the term

might be acceptable, the judge ruled that on the basis of expert testimony, there were differences of opinion regarding the technique the teacher used. Some experts had not approved of Mailloux's practice and stated that it was not essential to use the term. The judge ruled that for a controversial teaching method to be constitutionally protected, *it was necessary to prove that the method has acceptance by a preponderance of the profession*. He further emphasized the difference between secondary schools and universities. Secondary schools function more clearly *in loco parentis* than universities. Further, he added, some teachers and students in secondary schools have limited intellectual and emotional maturity. He also emphasized that secondary students are a more captive audience. In spite of this reasoning, Mailloux was reinstated. However, it was not on the basis of academic freedom but, rather, due process. Mailloux, it seemed, had not been given any warning and therefore did not know his conduct was prohibited.

Comparing just these two cases begins to indicate the extent to which the rights of teachers hinge on the circumstances and on the judges who sit on the case.

3. The Parducci Case in 1970 focused on one of Kurt Vonnegut's books, *Welcome to the Monkey House*. Three students (high school juniors) asked to be excused from reading it, some parents complained, and Marilyn Parducci was fired. Several vulgarities and a reference to rape was the basis for the criticism. The judge, however, found nothing obscene and further noted that the assignment did not lead to any disruption in the school or classroom. The judge ruled the dismissal to be an unwarranted invasion of the First Amendment. Marilyn Parducci was reinstated. It should be noted that the absence of disruption and the ruling that the material was not obscene were the criteria used in this case.

A case of special interest for social studies educators and NCSS is the Sterzing case of Stafford, Texas. Sterzing was known as a controversial teacher. He was dismissed after two parents complained about the materials used in a race relations lesson. These materials included an essay by Benjamin Spock on discrimination, an article by the B'nai B'rith on prejudice, and a study that minimized the importance of racial differences. Within two weeks after parents protested, he was fired. The Court, by and large, ruled in favor of Sterzing, stating that the First and Fourteenth Amendments were violated. Sterzing was paid $20,000 in damages and $5,000 in lawyer's fees. However, Sterzing was not reinstated because his presence might revive antagonisms. On appeal, this decision was seen as improper, and the lower court was ordered to reconsider its action. This is a case that NCSS supported both through the Legal Defense Fund and by providing Sterzing with expert testimony.

This brief discussion of significant academic freedom cases emphasizes that teachers at the pre-collegiate level cannot simply do as they please regarding the selection of materials or methods for their classes. Although the use of controversial materials and techniques has often been protected, teachers must, at a minimum, be able to demonstrate that their professional actions meet the following criteria:

1. are relevant to the subject being taught
2. are appropriate for the age and maturity level of students
3. are not disruptive to school or classroom discipline and
4. have the support of their profession.

Of course, the meaning of words like "relevant," "appropriate," and what constitutes "disruption" is determined subjectively by school boards, parents, expert witnesses that might be used, and the judge or judges hearing the case.

It is also important to remember that vulgar language was permissible when it was found to be central to the article and relevant to the subject matter, but not when it was found to be irrelevant. Teachers need to use sound professional judgment in selecting their materials, as contrasted with the example provided by an English teacher who listed Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying* in his elective minicourse: "The Literature of Flight."

## Conditions Heightening the Censorship Issue

Currently, a number of conditions are converging to heighten the censorship issue. I have already mentioned the increasing numbers of organizations that have formed to promote the use of educational materials that square with their particular values. Secondly, the 1973 and 1974 Supreme Court decisions making obscenity a concept that is defined by community, rather than by national standards, are another. (Whether the 1969 Keefe case [where the teacher used the *Atlantic Monthly* article containing a vulgar term] would be judged the same way is, in my view, not certain. It may well be that Keefe would be fired if his case were ruled on today. Indeed, the case may not have been admitted to federal court because obscenity issues are matters of local concern.) Thirdly, the back to basics movement carries with it an increased value for the historical versus the contemporary. This emphasis along with support for conventional morality results in turning aside materials that are likely to be controversial. Finally, the tight job market and low turnover of teachers are factors that will cause even the most courageous teacher to be cautious.

## What Can Be Done?

I would now like to turn to the matter of what can be done to deal with a difficult problem in difficult times. There are, from my vantage point, at least three perspectives to answering this question: that of the teacher, that of the school district, and that of the National Council for the Social Studies. Teachers can do a number of things: First, they can inform themselves about academic freedom and censorship. Documents such as the NCSS Position Statement on Academic Freedom and NCTE's Right to Read Statement should be in their possession. Second, teachers can see to it that their principals, superintendents, or department heads have copies of these basic academic freedom publications. Third, regardless of which teacher association prevails, teachers can exert influence to provide an academic freedom clause as part of the contract. At the national level both the NEA and the AFT support this position. Fourth, teachers can work at developing good relationships with parents. They can keep parents informed about what their classes are doing. Although elementary teachers have easier access to parents than do secondary teachers, the effort invested is well worth it. Good communication with parents probably constitutes the best insurance policy against angry and unreasonable attacks. Fifth, teachers can be prepared to defend what they teach. A statement of objectives related to the materials used to fulfill them can be an important tool if protests are made. Sixth, teachers can choose their materials soundly. While we don't want a sanitized curriculum, neither can we justify a sensationalized one. Or paraphrasing one writer, "Don't lust after fads in your obsession for relevance."[8] Seventh, when assigning controversial materials, teachers can make it clear that students may select an option if they find the materials offensive. All of us need to recognize and accept the fact that parents do have the right to decide what their own children read; they do not have the right to make that decision for others, however. Eighth, teachers can avoid using the classroom as an arena for their own ideologies. Rather, their role is to expose young minds to all points of view. This caution should not be taken to mean that teachers cannot express opinions. Rather, it implies that, when stated, such opinions are also open to discussion and debate. Ninth, if censorship attacks are directed at others in the school district, teachers can become informed and can take a position. The problem is shared by everyone. Fighting censorship is a lonely business; providing support to those attacked is terribly important.

School districts need to:

1. Conduct a continuing public relations campaign with the community.
2. Establish a strong academic freedom policy at the school board level.
3. Involve parents in the selection process, although the majority of members should be educators.

4. Establish a complaint procedure to systematize protests over materials. Avoid banning books until they have been fairly reviewed.

5. Maintain a standing review committee for materials that are attacked. Involve parents on this committee.

6. Make sure that all teachers have a set of educational objectives to which they relate their materials and their methods.

7. Make it a matter of policy to provide students with alternative assignments if they object to the regular one.

8. Train all administrative personnel and teachers to handle complaints about materials.

## What Should NCSS Be Doing?

There are several functions a professional organization can perform to strengthen the position of its members in dealing with censorship issues.

One of these is educational. Through its publication program, through articles and bulletins, and through position papers NCSS can continually inform the profession. In this category, NCSS has done its fair share.

1. We have an Academic Freedom Statement.

2. A fairly recent bulletin has been done by Ben Cox: *The Censorship Game and How to Play It.*

3. *Social Education* had a special section on the topic in 1975. The time is ripe for another one.

4. The Board of Directors just approved a *Handbook on the Selection of Instruction Materials,* which is, in effect, a position statement. This document guides teachers and school districts through the selection process and also provides suggestions for handling complaints.

5. The Field Services Board has just completed a workshop guide, entitled *Managing Community Controversy,* that can be used at state council meetings or in school districts to heighten awareness of the censorship issue.

Taken together, this list represents a substantial effort to inform this profession regarding censorship issues.

Beyond publications, sessions at national, regional, and state meetings represent another important way to educate the profession. Sparked by the interest of a handful of dedicated members, such workshops and sessions have been held. More systematic planning is needed. If each state and local council had its own Academic Freedom Committee which assumed responsibility for this activity, we would move a giant step forward.

Another category of activity for a professional association falls in the legal area. Filing *amicus* briefs in significant cases is one important activity. Two or three times in the last decade NCSS has had such briefs filed. The most recent filing was in a case (1977) brought by students in Levittown, New York, where a number of books were removed from their school library. In my view, it is terribly important that we recognize that censorship in one area of the school's program threatens all areas by creating an atmosphere where self-censorship thrives. Therefore, we cannot confine our anti-censorship activities to social studies alone.

Since 1970 NCSS has maintained a Legal Defense Fund to which the Board of Directors contributes $500 annually. We try to bolster this fund through the Academic Freedom Benefit at the Annual Meeting, but the response of members is not always great. The monies from these funds are available to members who find themselves under attack. It provides money for initial contacts with attorneys.

While NCSS is not likely to find itself in a position to assume full financial responsibility for a court case, it can help individuals secure the support of the American Civil Liberties Union, the AFT, or the NEA.

NCSS could also establish a Hot Line that an individual could call for advice. By securing a civil rights attorney who would respond to such calls, we could render important assistance when a crisis occurs.

Another set of activities is legislative in nature. Legislation that seeks to mandate curricula from a specific political perspective or tries to establish adoption procedures that violate professional principles needs to be resisted. This action occurs at the state level in state legislatures and with state boards of education. Pressure needs to be brought to bear by our state affiliates in concert with other professional organizations to prevent legislative decisions that either reflect censorship or maximize opportunities for it.

Finally, we need to maintain an important thrust that was started in November 1977, when eight professional organizations formed a loose coalition called the Academic Freedom Group. The purpose of AFG is to educate the profession as represented by the current members of the coalition. These are the NEA, the AFT, the American Library Association through its Office of Intellectual Freedom, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, the International Reading Association, the Speech Communication Association, and NCSS. This group has held leadership training workshops in the Midwest and the Northeast during its first year of existence. The next one will be in the Southeast. The purpose of these workshops is to train people who will, in turn, heighten anti-censorship activity within their state councils and form a network with other state-level organizations. In addition to leadership training, the coalition represents the possibility of taking collective action—whether that takes the form of joint *ami-*

*cus* briefs, support for legal action, or developing media campaigns when necessary. To my knowledge, this represents the first time educational organizations have combined to address the matter of censorship. It is a very important beginning and must be maintained. At the moment, the Academic Freedom Group is the only educational voice that is organized. It represents a response to the highly organized and well financed groups that seek to limit the range of intellectual opportunities that schools provide for young people.

School libraries and classrooms are but one arena for censorship efforts. Because the education of young people is at stake, it is a very important one. To the extent that we who are responsible for and concerned with student learning view freedom to learn as one significant factor in the quality of democratic education, to the same extent we become champions of the First Amendment as applied to school settings.

I would like to end this speech with a quotation from one of the few people who has had a hero-like status for me—Justice William O. Douglas. In a dissenting opinion in 1959, Douglas stated:

> Ultimately all the questions in this case really boil down to one—whether we as a people will try fearfully and futilely to preserve democracy by adopting totalitarian methods, or whether in accordance with our traditions and our Constitution we will have the confidence and courage to be free.[9]

## Notes

1. Edward Jenkinson, *Censorship Is Here and Now*. Unpublished paper, 4.
2. *Ibid.*
3. James C. Hefley, *Textbooks on Trial*. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1976, 118-119.
4. *Ibid.*, 121-122.
5. *Ibid.*, 126
6. *Ibid.*, 132.
7. Taken from Edward Jenkinson, *Censorship Is Here and Now*. Unpublished paper.
8. Allan A. Glatthorn, "Forum, Censorship, the Law and the Teacher of English," *English Journal*, February, 1977, 14
9. Thomas I. Emerson, *Toward a General Theory of the First Amendment*. New York: Random House, 1966, 189.

# 1980

## WHERE HAVE ALL THE HEROES GONE?

*Todd Clark*

**Todd Clark was director of the Constitutional Rights Foundation in Los Angeles.**

**This presidential address was presented on November 21, 1980 to the 60th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at New Orleans, Louisiana. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 45 (April 1981): 228-231. ERIC Number: EJ 258 670.**

# 1980

## Where Have All the Heroes Gone?

*Todd Clark*

My most important teacher has always been my father. By his example and from our conversations on ideas and their application to life, I have learned more than I can ever thank him for. Born January 1, 1900, he now lives in very active retirement in a small town near Fresno, California, where members of our family first settled in the 1860s.

My father has lived through 80 years of the bloodiest and most inhumane and sinister century that humankind has ever experienced. He has observed the tragedy of nearly constant warfare, of deliberate genocide, of violations of human rights without parallel. Yet he believes as strongly today as he always has in the perfectibility of our species, in the potential goodness of human beings, and in the fact that the beauty and heroism of individuals outweigh the bestiality of so much that has happened during his lifetime.

My dad has always found inspiration in the lives of individuals of courage who stood up for what they believed in. All my life he has told me stories of such heroic people. I'm sure he has never made a list, but—drawn from my memory—it would include the well-known Schweitzer and Gandhi; and not so well-known Wilfred Grenfell and his mission to the fishermen of Labrador; Kagawa, a Japanese who gave up a life of ease to work for the poor; and dozens of others. Most recently, he has been talking of a man named André Trocmé, whose work is described in a fine book, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* (Harper & Row, 1979), by Philip Hallie.

Trocmé, a Protestant minister and committed pacifist, was a remarkable leader who turned his village, Le Chambon, in the mountains of Southeastern France, into a haven for Jewish refugees during World War II.

Standing for non-violence, he motivated the people of his village by self-example to support a principle with their lives in the face of terrible danger. As a result, hundreds were saved.

Using such examples, which illustrate what individuals can accomplish, my dad has always maintained and acted upon a belief that one man or woman can make a difference. As a realist, I have been more skeptical than he. As a student of history, I have suspected that inexorable forces control events. I have tended to believe that we need to study and to teach about these forces.

Over time, I have become less sure of all this, for, somehow, focusing on generalizations, trends, and concepts as the key factors of human lives tends to minimize the role of the individual and of the human spirit—evil as well as good—to influence human affairs and individual behavior. There have been, of course, men and women larger than life who stand out—the heroes we can all identify—those people who somehow transcend the forces that so often seem to control our destiny. According to my values and those of our democratic creed, Martin Luther King, Jr. and César Chávez are heroes for their commitment to equal opportunity and non-violence; William O. Douglas, for his dedication to the individual threatened by the power of the state; Clarence Darrow for championing the underdog; Giuseppi Verdi, for writing operas about people who fought for freedom; and Pablo Casals, for his resistance to the oppression of Franco and the Nazis and for using his cello in the name of peace. For the most part, we choose as heroes those individuals who seem larger than life. That's understandable, but is it acceptable in a democracy? Can we afford to measure as heroes only *leaders* who look brave? Might we not have dumped Carter for Reagan because one smiled in the face of danger while the other frowned? Should we always look for or expect heroic proportions in our leaders? Should we not be as able to recognize heroism in the commitment to principles of ordinary people who work to better the human condition, who value justice and freedom, who by their lives provide examples of human behavior that stretch and enhance and protect the lives of others? I can think of no better illustration of heroism than the actions of the son in the film "The Great Santini." This boy, torn between the safety of non-involvement and the extreme physical danger of standing up for his beliefs, did the latter and went to the aid of a friend. What a fine example he sets for the non-involved young people of today!

Or, take the case of Rosa Parks, the black woman from Montgomery, Alabama, whose feet got tired and who refused to move to the back of the bus. Her arrest triggered the bus boycott and brought national attention to Martin Luther King, Jr., and the application of Gandhian non-violence to the American scene. He, not she, is remembered as a hero, even though King's non-violence cannot be effective unless others, such as Rosa Parks, are first willing to take risks and to resist the use of violence themselves.

Who are your heroes? What values did they stand for? What victories did they win? Did they lose all or did they lose to fight again? Answer those questions for yourself. I believe it is *vital* that you do so. For without the example such people set, you stand alone. Alone, you are easier to intimidate, easier to force to conformity than you would be if there were another who had gone before.

Take the case of *Charles James*. He was only a substitute teacher. No regular credential or tenured position protected him. After the Cambodian invasion he wore a black armband of protest to his job at Addison High School in upstate New York. He was ultimately fired, and fought the system for years. The effects were devastating to his life. He finally won—after four years of unemployment—only to be released from his district at the end of his contracted year. Listen to what he said: "I wore the armband only as a symbol of conscience. I didn't do it so I would lose my job, or hurt my family, or be a martyr. I did it because I had to live with myself. Politicians won't tell us the truth. So a man who feels that truth has to tell it for himself. No man should take a simple statement of conscience away from another man. If I had walked out [of the principal's office] without my armband on, I would have been without identity or self respect. And, if I hadn't fought on, I never would have felt free again."

The issue for which James fought is of no consequence to us today. The fact that he did fight and won in a United States Federal Court means a lot. It means we have a case, at least in that federal district, which provides each of us with the right to stand up for principles in our schools without fear. Telling the story of this man's battle is also a dramatic way to teach about the freedom of ideas in a manner our students can relate to.

Why *don't* we emphasize the individual in what we teach? In so many ways we are fascinated by ourselves, by other people, and by how they live their lives—why *don't* we do more to present our subjects that way? Look at the popularity of movies, TV, magazines, and novels about people. Or consider how our friend James Michener writes books which illustrate forces, trends, movements, and concepts, as well as the merit of the individual. He is the ideal social studies teacher. In his novels there can be found a faith in the nobility of ordinary people. His sense of the heroic is the same as mine. His faith in stories which involve *and* instruct sets a standard we should think about carefully next time we watch a student open a textbook.

As I'm sure you realize by now, it is not my intention to present a tightly reasoned argument regarding the role of the hero in history; I leave that task to others. Rather, my purpose is to suggest that we have become so preoccupied by the larger forces of our times and our past that we have forgotten to emphasize individuals who influence our society and our world. We want young people to understand concepts and generalizations, to learn of various forces and trends, but, in my judgment, we have failed to present a truth vital to our democratic society: that the individual must be measured—not by his or her membership in a group or subgroup, but by his or her capacity to stand up for values that are consistent with individual freedom. One can find examples of this almost everywhere *except* in our classrooms. Take "Norma Rae" for example—not a unit in a curriculum, but a movie—based upon a true story. This young woman, when surrounded by evidence of the need for a union to counteract the power of management, risked her job and her family's well-being to organize other workers. Her victory has far more meaning to us all and deals more effectively with power in the workplace than does a traditional unit on the union movement.

In our zeal to teach knowledge, skills, and generalizations, we have overlooked the value of the parable as a teaching strategy, the story from which a moral message or truth can be drawn. We are enamored of the impersonal world of paradigm, not parable. Linking the two must be our task so that we can present our world in ways that will be of greater interest and significance to our students as they attempt to understand their role in the affairs of the community. Parables of the courage of ordinary people: the two fine women of Northern Ireland, one Catholic, one Protestant, who got sick of killing, and, in spite of nationalism, religion, or economics, worked to stop it; or Steve Biko, the black leader whose murder illustrates violations of human rights in South Africa, or the Russian dissidents of the Helsinki watch whose quest for freedom shows the strength of the human spirit. Read your students this statement of Shcharansky, made at the end of his nearly secret trial, witnessed only by his brother. He said he was not sorry for criticizing the government, but happy because he lived at peace with his own conscience. "[I] have not betrayed my conscience even when threatened with death. I am happy that I helped people."

In the Western World, we have divorced our fascination with people from our love affair with science. We study past and present; we properly search for causal forces—economic, theological, geographic—and we always will. But we must stop reducing or overlooking the value of the individual in determining the course of human affairs and the impact that the story of one person's quest for freedom or justice can have on others. We have left to the media the task of developing the stories of outstanding people in our society. As educators, we often teach what seems unrelated to reality and to life.

Even today's historians, some of whom may be the least social scientific of our models, have applied the methods of the social scientist to their study of the past; their way of looking at what occurred has changed. The attention they once gave to the progression of events—to a consideration of what happened in history—has become a kind of "freeze frame" look at an event based on the application of systems analysis, the computerized examination of roll-call votes, ethnocultural variable analysis, and other sophisticated processes. Although this is happening in the context of a deeper and more thorough examination of social history, there remains the danger that the individual will be lost in the process and the example drawn from history will be the group, the movement, or the force—not the person. While we do not realize it, I believe we are teaching a form of determinism which denigrates the individual just as surely as if we tried.

Hope about one's future depends on faith—faith that the person can matter—that none of us need to be caught up by forces beyond control—that working, speaking out, spending money, and getting involved can help.

What I believe we should be doing is illustrating to our students that individuals do count—that the efforts of one person *can* change events. I do not mean the hero who is larger than life, I mean the individual among us who, for reasons not always rational or clear, not always in keeping with the sociologist's data on accepted group behavior, and not always manifestly good, stands for or against some issue or situation in a way which enriches human life and illustrates the positive beliefs of our society.

History abounds in examples of ordinary people who behaved in extraordinary and heroic ways to uphold the values we consider basic to our way of life. I have mentioned several. We can all relate to them. We can ask ourselves and our students, "How would we have acted in similar circumstances?"

It is important to point out that these people's efforts did not always change things. In some cases, they only acted to uphold their beliefs. In others, the power of the state, the institution, or the group was simply too strong to be affected by their efforts. But remember what Shcharansky said, "I am happy, I have lived at peace with my conscience."

Such stories are easy to collect and simple to infuse into any of the courses that make up the social studies. All that is required is that we look for exemplary people whose actions illustrate values that move us toward a just society. These stories can be drawn from history, biography, and daily news, fiction, movies, television, or magazines.

Let me mention three accounts of heroes I would teach about.

- *Julia*—This film tells the story of two heroes. One is a brilliant, wealthy, self-assured young woman who risks and ultimately loses her life in Europe helping people escape the Nazis. As exemplary as is Julia, her friend Lillian is perhaps a more useful model, for she acts bravely in spite of her own fear and smuggles money into Germany so that her friend can continue her work. Both the film and the original story, from Lillian Hellman's *Pentimento*, are ideal teaching parables.
- Or *Polngaysi Qoyawama*—Her autobiography reveals a Hopi woman who devoted her life to helping her people learn to bridge the gap between the best of white culture and the best of the Hopi tradition. With quiet courage, this woman moved from the status of outcast in her own culture to that of respected teacher. She faced a multitude of problems, but somehow stood her ground and helped her people.
- Or *Perez Esquivel*—There are numerous articles about this Argentine architect and winner of the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize who has risked his life on behalf of others in a nation where people who dissent often disappear forever. He has been jailed and tortured, but continues his work for human rights and against poverty. His absolute commitment to non-violence again illustrates the power of this concept.

These are only a few cases of individuals who have stood for principle against power far greater than themselves. They each provide examples that may be of help in pointing out to young people that the actions of any one of us can influence others and sometimes—*sometimes*—change things for the better.

Their lives may also help illustrate how and against what odds individuals sometimes work to influence events. But we must also provide our people with examples of those who work for change against somewhat lesser odds. Political action at the local level is replete with examples of individuals who work persistently and successfully to achieve change helpful to their communities. Many of these people are adults, but there are also young people who make things happen. Such examples show students how they can perhaps help bring about change themselves.

It is my view that our influence as educators is greatest when what we teach parallels life as it is perceived by our students, so that it makes sense, is useful, and, perhaps most important of all, inspires involvement.

We face an uncertain future. Our nation and world confront problems so enormous that they numb the mind. I fear that the importance of the individual in the future is threatened. Respect for the person is not now widespread. Although Western society claims to value the individual, we have created cultures and institutions which are not built to human scale.

To put affairs in order may require many of us to make commitments to principles that do not have pleasant consequences. But, the future of our species may depend on the extent to which we and others are willing to act on behalf of our beliefs.

## Conclusion

As we face grave issues, our nation and our world will not behave as we want them to. Some Americans still train police to torture in the name of capitalism. In Russia, dissidents still suffer. Orlov is again in solitary confinement!

We must, of course, work to raise the level of understanding that our students have of the vast accumulation of data that explain our past and our times. We must certainly teach them the skills they need to use that information. We must also provide the stimulus to get them out into the world as participants.

*But*, more important than all else—because, in my view, it is the only way this nation and this world can survive—we must convince the young that rationality alone is not enough—that humane values of our nation, its constitution and its Bill of Rights, and our commitment to equality for all are more than abstractions or a record of past achievement—that they reflect the story of people with courage, dedication, patience, people of both belief and action. We must convince the young that one person of belief can change a neighborhood, a community, a town, a state, a nation, a world. If we lose sight of the conviction that the person is the measure of human good, all is lost. Groups, parties, nations, races, cultures—none can replace or overshadow the value of one person of courage working to help others.

Human rights are threatened everywhere. We must become involved as an organization and as individuals, calling attention to our own actions to our faith in people and our hatred of oppression. Look at the work of Amnesty International. This small group, absolutely committed to non-violence and supporting those who are non-violent, does make a difference. All of us can, too!

My father's idealism has never been shaken. I, only now, am coming to believe what he has known for so long—that all of us can be heroes by acting in support of human rights and the human spirit!

# 1981

## RENAISSANCE IN SOCIAL STUDIES: A CHALLENGE AND A RESPONSIBILITY

*Theodore Kaltsounis*

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**This presidential address was presented on November 20, 1981 to the 61st Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Detroit, Michigan. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 46 (March 1982): 201-203. ERIC Number: EJ 269 017.**

# 1981

## Renaissance in Social Studies: A Challenge and a Responsibility

*Theodore Kaltsounis*

For months now I have been thinking about what to say on this occasion. As the time went by, I kept revising my plans. At one point, the thought occurred to me to be scholarly and profound. So, with the assistance of Walter Parker, a very able graduate student, I initiated a study on the socio-political participation of social studies teachers as compared to that of the general public. While I collected some interesting data that I plan to share briefly with you, Anna Ochoa stole the thunder away from me with that fine report of a similar study of hers published in the October 1981 *Social Education.*

In a way I am glad, because just reporting on a research study might not have been the most appropriate presentation at this time, particularly in light of the prevailing pessimistic mood among educators across the country. I do not need to tell you that education is under attack throughout the nation and that teachers are subjected to all kinds of abuse; and, in my opinion, most of it is unjustified.

There is no question that a number of incompetent teachers exist out there: but, for every incompetent teacher, there are many who are most qualified and who continuously demonstrate a high degree of commitment to what they are doing. The problem is that they are human beings and they can take abuse only to a point. I have been in the field of education for more than twenty-five years, but it is only recently that such terms as "burn-out" and "stress management" appeared in the educational vocabulary. Good teachers run into all sorts of professional disappointments and either drive themselves to poor health or away from teaching. Those who still endure often ask themselves: "For how long can I put up with this?" "Is it really worth it?"

This last question is a critical one. Is it really worth it? As I traveled throughout the country this year, I had the privilege of meeting many dedicated teachers and witnessed the pressures under which they work. I became quite sensitive to their needs. Quite often they are in despair. One of their needs is manifested in their desire for any sort of positive reinforcement. They like to hear from someone that what they do makes a difference. Within this negativistic atmosphere that now exists, teachers want to be reassured that they make a contribution.

That is exactly what I would like to do today: to reassure social studies teachers that theirs is a most valuable contribution. The more they are aware of this, the greater commitment they are likely to exhibit and the more effective they can be.

### A Personal Approach

What, then, is the social studies teacher's mission? I could have used a number of ways to respond to this question, but allow me to apply a personal approach.

Let me begin by pointing out that my election to the highest office of the National Council for the Social Studies ought to be viewed as a significant event. It sounds like an arrogant statement; but the significance lies not in the fact that I am now the President, but in the realization that the system has made it possible for me, with the kind of background that I have, to become President. In many social systems throughout the world, this would not have been possible.

When I graduated from high school in the old country, I was selected to participate in an international work camp. There were nine of us from the host country and about twenty others from other parts of the world. Quite often those of us from the host country met together for a variety of reasons. We started with nine: but as soon as we discovered that one young lady was not a member of the dominant church in the country, the group was quickly reduced to eight. Without any qualms about it, we excluded this young lady from all of our meetings.

I suppose all eight of us should assume responsibility of having done something like this, but in the final analysis it was the formal structure of the society that permitted us—most likely, encouraged us—to engage in such a degree of discrimination. We were totally insensitive to the feeling of alienation that we were developing in that person.

"So what?" someone might say. "There is plenty of discrimination in this country." That is true, but there is no other society that has done more to denounce discrimination openly and do something about it in a practical sense. There is much more to be done, but we have made progress. In most other societies, the tide is going the other direction. Class structure, excessive nationalism, and religious fanaticism have become more powerful forces than the desire to live together and respect human life.

As we look in Afghanistan, in Cambodia, in South Africa, in Northern Ireland, in Poland, in Cyprus, in Iran, in Ethiopia, and in many other places, there is more uncertainty and despair around the world than there is hope.

In many societies ideological differences are approached with a complete lack of tolerance. Did you ever stop to think about the importance of this most valuable but fragile commodity—tolerance? Lack of tolerance for ideological differences leads to either chaos or dictatorship. It leads to drastically distorted relationships between the members of a society.

As a teenager, I remember well the communist take-over of Albania. Anyone who opposed the system was imprisoned, and many were executed. I saw staged executions with my own eyes. No one dared to express his or her views openly, if they were different from those of the dominant party. During the earlier stages of the regime, when my father was discussing social and political issues with his friends, he had us children watching behind nearby walls to make sure no one was listening. A few months later, he would not trust even us—his own children! The indoctrination in the schools was so rigorous that he did not want to take a chance. The foundations of the institution of family were brutally undermined in favor of ideology.

There is much conflict around the world. Millions of people live in war situations. Millions of children are born and they are compelled to grow in hostile and frightening environments. It is difficult for Americans to realize what a disastrous effect a war situation can have upon young people. It inflicts upon them hate and aggressiveness, which lead to a feeling of alienation.

Most of you probably grew up participating in Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, in Little Leagues, and in similar cooperative and exciting group activities. My friends and I lived as children in the midst of the war and played games similar to the ones the adults played. We divided ourselves into companies and battalions and fought against each other in ways that put even our lives in jeopardy. Why not? Divisiveness, open conflict, and disregard for human life was what we were experiencing every day.

Growing up in environments filled with conflict forces one to take sides, to exclude and dislike others, and to develop a narrow attitude and a dangerously narrow mentality. Being a Greek ethnic, I was born and lived as a child in what is now southern Albania. The people in southern Albania identify with Greece and they object to being held by Albania.

Under the circumstances, you can understand that I did not just learn to hate, but I was born to hate, Albanians.

Later, I came in contact with Mussolini's soldiers who invaded Albania. I hated them just as much, because they were about to attack Greece, which they did. I hated the Nazis even more because they came to the aid of the Albanians and the Italians. Besides, they were brutal. Finally, the communists took over, and, mainly because my father was a priest, I learned to hate them as well. We escaped into Greece just as we learned that my father was about to be arrested and executed.

I mentioned earlier an international work camp in which I participated. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. As a matter of fact, I would not be here today were it not for that camp. However, I was recommended for this camp: I did not apply. As a matter of fact, the news that I was selected to participate seemed to be the worst news I had ever received. It was difficult for me to accept living for six weeks with people from other countries. Although I was a high school graduate at that time, I felt that people from other countries were all bad. Why not? With the exception of the Greeks, all others I came in contact with were bad. I knew that from experience, and no one could convince me otherwise. As you can see, I was totally alienated from the world.

So, there are rigid structures in many societies. There is lack of tolerance for ideological differences. There are excessive discriminatory practices, hostilities, and open conflicts that tend to alienate millions of people. This alienation prevents them from reaching their potential. Having experienced all these, I am sure you understand why I feel my election to the presidency of NCSS was a significant event. I don't think it could have happened in many other societies. It speaks well for our social system. Our system is not perfect, but it is one of the few that inspire hope. Though occasionally there are the Watergates, the Ku Klux Klan activities, the actions of the so-called Moral Majority, and the campaigns of the book burners, the American system has the capability of allowing most individuals to achieve their potential. It certainly did allow me to do just that.

One of the messages I attempted to bring to state and regional meetings this year was that the nature and quality of our system should not be taken for granted. Jefferson said many years ago: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." The phrase I would like to emphasize in this statement is "in a state of civilization." Our system is in a state of civilization. Our way of life is not the natural way of life; it has been developed and we need to work hard to keep it at that level.

## Towards a Renaissance for the Social Studies

Ladies and gentlemen, there can be no better renaissance for the social studies than the strong realization on the part of social studies teachers that they are the key guardians of our system. Society expects us to work with young people to preserve, as well as do, all we can to improve our way of life.

Strong realization and commitment to our mission is the first step toward a renaissance in social studies. We need also to exercise some serious introspection and become more sophisticated in the ways we are carrying out our mission. In the past, we made mistakes. We abandoned traditional practices and reached for anything that was new, without a full knowledge of the value of these new practices. In some cases, we cornered ourselves in extreme and narrow positions. There were teachers, for example, who had replaced social studies entirely with value clarification exercises. Instead of playing the role of a social studies instructor, these particular teachers became amateur psychiatrists. Our mistakes allowed pressure groups, special interests, and political entities to go beyond their limits and dictate the social studies program.

If we want to achieve a renaissance in social studies, we need to raise the level of sophistication of our profession's membership. It concerns me when I go to a well-known high school and discover that the dozen-or-so social studies teachers hardly ever get together, as professionals with a common mission, to discuss social studies issues. We have some very capable individuals out there, but we need to work better collectively.

I suppose each one of you can come up with many suggestions on how to raise the level of sophistication of our profession. May I suggest, however, that we begin by carefully screening those aspiring to enter the profession? With the demand for social studies teachers being as low as it is, there is no valid reason for us to admit weak students. At least, we should be drawing the future social studies teachers from the top 50% of our student populations. We should also be looking for individuals with a broad knowledge of society and with experiences that promise a good model for our young people in socio-civic and political participation.

Unless students in other institutions are a lot different from those at the University of Washington, I am sure you observed that most of them want to stay with the so-called "rules-curriculum"—with what they need to get by tomorrow in their student teaching situation. They are not interested in what they conveniently call "theory." This is only speculation, but most likely we will not select the right people to become social studies teachers until we find those who are attracted to "theory" and the thinking that usually goes with it.

I mentioned earlier that we should select young people with experiences that promise a good model for our young people in socio-political participation. Convinced by the research on the socialization process, as well as by common sense, that modeling is an effective way to teach citizenship, we attempted at the University of Washington, as I mentioned earlier, to determine the extent to which social studies teachers are socio-politically active and to compare them with the general public. To make the comparison, we used data collected by Verba and Nie of the University of Chicago and published in 1972.

Verba and Nie classified the general electorate from inactives to complete activists, or, to put it in another way, from apathetics to socio-civic gladiators. In between these two extremes, they included, in hierarchical order, the following categories: voting specialists or spectators, light campaigners, campaign activists, and communal activists. Social studies teachers were, then, classified in these six categories, starting with the lowest level of participation and ending with the highest.

55.2% of the teachers were classified in the top three categories, with most of these falling in the communal activists category, the fifth category. Just 7% were complete activists. The Verba and Nie data showed a somewhat lower percentage of the general electorate falling in the top three categories. It was 46%, but the percentage of complete activists was 11%, which is four percentage points higher than in the social studies teacher population.

What the data show are that there are about 45% of social studies teachers who are not good models of socio-political participation. This is rather disturbing, and especially when one takes into consideration the fact that the sample was drawn entirely from the membership of NCSS. Unless I am wrong, one would expect NCSS members to be more active than those who are not NCSS members. We plan to collect data from non-NCSS members and attempt to make a comparison.

Do social studies teachers believe they should be models of socio-political participation for their students? Do they believe that their level of participation makes any difference in the quality of their teaching? 67.9% of our sample said, "yes," their level of socio-political participation does make a difference in the quality of their teaching. On the other hand, 32.1% indicated they do not believe their level of socio-political participation makes a difference.

So, I stand before you this evening to pronounce that we do have an important mission. A strong realization of this mission is probably the most important starting point to achieve a renaissance in social studies. But at the same time, we need to achieve a higher level of sophistication in the way in which we carry out our mission. To accomplish this, we must fill our ranks with strong people—people who value scholarship, people who have a compassion for other people, and people who are strong models of socio-political participation. As you can see, I place the responsibility for a renaissance in social studies on each one of us. It is our challenge and our responsibility.

# 1982

# CULTURAL DEMOCRACY, CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

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**This presidential address was presented on November 25, 1982 to the 62nd Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Boston, Massachusetts. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 47 (March 1983): 178-179, 222-232. ERIC Number: EJ 298 723.**

# 1982

## Cultural Democracy, Citizenship Education, and the American Dream

*James A. Banks*

### The American Dream and American Citizenship

The American Dream is a complex and cogent idea. Because of the American Dream and the possibilities for its realization in this land, millions of individuals have come to the United States seeking it. The American Dream is still a powerful idea which pulls to America each year thousands of immigrants who hope to realize it. This fact is especially significant because the material aspects of the American Dream are becoming increasingly elusive for most Americans.

Since the early years of the Republic, individuals from almost every culture, nationality, and ethnic group have been able to become American citizens by declaring allegiance to the American democratic ideology. However, the price for full citizenship was cultural assimilation into the Anglo-Saxon dominated American national culture. When they accepted the American political ideology and became culturally assimilated, however, groups from lands such as Asia and Africa were unable to enjoy the full benefits of American citizenship because of their physical characteristics. The United States became one of the most equitable nations in the world during the early years of the Republic. Nevertheless, particular *ideological, cultural,* and *physical* characteristics became prerequisites for a full American identification and for total participation in the body polity.[1]

Ideological requisites for full American citizenship are essential, as they are for civic participation in any democratic nation-state. Each nation-state must have an overarching set of ideals to which all of its citizens have attachments and commitments. In the United States, these ideals include

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liberty, equality, justice, and human dignity. Each democratic nation-state must also have cultural components that all its citizens must acquire in order to participate fully in the body polity. The skills to speak and write the national language and to make a decent living are needed to be an effective citizen. In the United States, for example, all citizens need to be literate in standard English in order to fully participate in the civic life of the nation. This is true even though there are legally mandated bilingual ballots in some regions of the nation.

## Cultural Democracy

Cultural democracy is an ideology that emerged in the United States at the turn of the century. It was exhumed during the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Philosophers and writers in the early 1900s—such as Horace Kallen, Randolph Bourne, and Julius Draschler, of immigrant background themselves—were strongly committed to cultural freedom for the flood of Southern, Central, and Eastern Europeans who were settling in the United States.[2] They formulated the concepts of *cultural democracy* and *cultural pluralism* to provide a philosophical justification for cultural freedom for the European Americans. When the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s emerged, groups such as Blacks, Mexican Americans, and American Indians revived these concepts to justify their quests for cultural, economic, and political equity.

A central tenet of cultural democracy is that individuals and groups must have cultural freedom in a democratic nation-state just as they have political freedom. Political democracy, this position maintains, gives individuals and groups the right to practice their primordial cultures and behaviors as long as they do not conflict with the over-arching values and goals of the commonwealth.

Cultural democracy theorists believe that all Americans should internalize American democratic ideals and the elements of the national culture needed to fully participate in the body polity. However, they believe that individuals can internalize American political ideals and become competent in the civic culture while maintaining important aspects of their primordial cultures. Public institutions such as schools—cultural democracy theorists maintain—have the responsibility to help people acquire the skills needed to fully participate in the commonwealth, but not the right to alienate them from their primordial cultures. They believe that individuals and groups have both the ability and the right to be bicultural and multicultural in a pluralistic democracy.

## Citizenship Education and Multiple Identifications

Children are socialized in regional, ethnic, social class, and religious communities in which they develop values, behaviors, and commitments that differ from those of youths socialized in other American communities and microcultures. In addition to developing identifications to their primordial communities and cultures, students are citizens of the American commonwealth and acquire national characteristics and attachments. They also live in a world society and are influenced by international events and developments. However, like other nationals, Americans tend to have weak identifications with the global community.

Citizenship education should help students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to make reflective public decisions consistent with American political ideals. The effective citizen within a democratic nation-state has a commitment to the overarching and shared idealized national values and the skills and commitment to act on them. To help students to become effective citizens of the American commonwealth, the school must help them to develop clarified, reflective, and positive identifications and attachments to their *cultural* communities, the *nation-state,* and the *global world society.*[3] Students who have negative and confused identifications with their local cultures are not likely to develop reflective national attachments. Individuals must have clarified and reflective national identifications in order to become effective citizens of the global community. Cultural, national, and global identifications are integrally related; each is a requisite to the other.

## Cultural Identification

While there are many definitions of culture, we may define culture as the unique values, symbols, lifestyles, institutions, and other human-made components that distinguish one group from another. In the United States, we can describe the American national culture (the macroculture) as well as the diverse subcultural groups that are integral parts of the American national culture (the microcultures). We can, for example, distinguish the national culture of the United States from those of Japan, Nigeria, and India, each of which has a unique set of characteristics. In *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture,* Ruth Benedict describes some of the modal characteristics of Japanese culture and contrasts it to American culture.[4] She discusses the importance of loyalty, honor, shame, and respect for authority in Japanese society.

The national character studies written by American anthropologists during the 1940s and 1950s were attempts to describe the macroculture of the United States using both anthropological and psychological concepts.

Anthropologists such as Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict wrote some of the most influential examples of this genre. Mead's book, *And Keep Your Powder Dry,*[5] published in 1942, became one of the best known of the national character studies. Erik Erikson's book, *Childhood and Society* (1950), includes an important chapter on the American character, "Reflections on the American Identity."[6]

In addition to describing the American national culture, the microcultural groups that constitute it can also be described. Examples of this genre include Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture,*[7] in which she contrasts the Pueblo Indian culture of New Mexico with other North American Indian groups; Shirley Achor's ethnography of a Chicano community, *Mexican Americans in a Dallas Barrio;*[8] Jules Henry's *Pathways to Madness,*[9] a study of five mainstream-American suburban families; Elena Padilla's *Up from Puerto Rico,*[10] a study of New York's Spanish Harlem; and *On the Street Where I Live* by Melvin D. Williams, an ethnography of a Black Pittsburgh neighborhood.[11]

American youths are members of many different cultural groups and have multiple group attachments and identifications. An American child may be simultaneously a Baptist, a Southerner, a girl scout, a female, an Anglo-Saxon, and an Appalachian. The importance of each of these groups to her at any one time will vary depending on many factors, including the times, the situations in which she finds herself, and her stages of psychological and social development.

Each of the group identifications of students is important and merits careful study by social scientists and educators. However, in this paper I am using the term *cultural identification* to refer only to those attachments and identifications that relate to regional, religious, social class, ethnic, and racial groups. These groups are primarily ascriptive and involuntary. I am not using culture in this context to describe national character or national culture. In this paper, *national identification* is used to describe an individual's attachment to his or her nation-state or national culture; and *global identification* is used to describe an individual's attachment to the world community.

I am defining identification as "a social-psychological process involving assimilating the values, standards, expectations, or social roles of another person or persons . . . into one's behavior and self-conception."[12] When an individual develops an identification with a particular group, he or she "internalizes the interests, standards, and role expectations of the group."[13] Identification is an evolving, dynamic, complex, and ongoing process and not a static or uni-dimensional concept. All individuals belong to many different groups and consequently develop multiple group identifications and loyalties.

I am concerned in this paper with how variables such as race, ethnicity, social class, region, and religion—separately and together—influence the socialization of American youths and result in their having behaviors, speech patterns, values, and world views that differ and sometimes conflict with those of other American youths and with mainstream American institutions. The cultural groups that are the focus in this paper are primarily ascriptive and involuntary, are groups that strongly influence the socialization and values of their members, and are primary groups to which individuals are likely to have deep psychological attachments, primordial affiliations, and a sense of peoplehood and historic attachment. These groups evoke feelings and allegiances of a "we-they" and an "us-them" variety. The attachments that individuals are likely to have to their primordial cultural groups, such as their small neighborhood and their ethnic or religious group, are primarily emotional, non-reflective, unexamined, and unconscious.

The primordial communities in which students are socialized deeply influence their behavior, their notions of what is right and wrong, and their fundamental beliefs about the world in which they live. Students' ideas about the sacred and the secular, and the importance of each in their lives, are also cogently shaped by their cultural communities. Many of the problems that develop between the school and the community, and many of the cultural disparities that students experience, are caused by conflicting values, beliefs, and behaviors that are taught by the home and the school. The American school, because of its role and function, has become increasingly more secular and scientific since the turn of the century and highly suspicious and hostile toward folk beliefs and cultures. Yet, many students are socialized in homes and communities in which the sacred is valued more than the secular and the scientific, and in which traditional cultural beliefs and values are strongly held.

## Cultural, National, and Global Identifications: Educational Implications

We need to determine the most appropriate educational responses to the different and often conflicting behaviors, values, beliefs, and identifications that students bring to school. Our role is certainly not merely to reinforce them. Such an education would be far too limiting and culturally encapsulating. It would also not help students to attain the values, skills, and abilities needed to fully participate in the national civic culture. Some writers have argued that the school merely reinforces the values and behavior of mainstream American youths and rarely helps them to better understand other American microcultures or to develop cross-cultural competencies.

While the school should not merely reinforce the parochial cultures of students, it should, however, try to avoid teaching students contempt for their primordial cultures and making them ashamed of their behavior, values, and world-views. In their eagerness to teach scientific views of the world, teachers often make students feel ashamed for holding sacred beliefs that defy scientific logic. Educators should have as one of their major aims teaching students the scientific, secular, and universal culture of the nation-state, but should also realize that science and technology, despite their importance in modern life, cannot satisfy all of the important social and psychological needs of humans. Writes Apter, "[Modernization] leaves what might be called a *primordial space,* a space people try to fill when they believe they have lost something fundamental and try to recreate it [emphasis added]."[14]

The school curriculum should reflect the reality that students must function both in their private cultures and in the public civic community. It should help students to function in these two worlds. The school should play a mediating role. It should help students to resolve the conflicts that arise from their functioning in the private world of the home and the neighborhood and in the public world of the school and nation-state. Gerald Grant believes that students are increasingly deserting public for private schools because their parents want them educated in a cultural community that has moral authority.[15] The public school should unabashedly promote values that are consistent with the American Creed. It should also respect, but not necessarily promote, the values and behavior that students bring to the classroom and help them to understand how their cultures influence their behavior, values, and world views.

It is essential for the school to help students function both within their private neighborhoods and in the public civic society. However, this ambitious task is fraught with difficulties and uncertainties. There are inherent conflicts between modernity and tradition; and between folk cultures and the culture of the scientific and secular community. However, trying to help students to function effectively within their private and public worlds is an important, if difficult, role for contemporary schools.

## Understanding Diverse Cultures

Educators need to develop a sophisticated understanding of the diverse groups to which students belong and to learn how their cultures influence their learning and behavior. Teachers should also help students develop an understanding of their own cultural groups and acquire cultural identifications that are reflective and clarified. Through the process of developing reflective and clarified cultural identifications, students will hopefully acquire more positive attitudes toward their neighborhoods and communities.

Helping students to develop reflective, clarified, and positive identifications with their cultural groups does not mean that we should teach cultural hero worship, group ethnocentrism, and cultural myths and fantasies. Too much of traditional American history teaching commits these sins. Many ethnic studies and women's studies lessons during the 1960s and 1970s also engaged a great deal in myth-making and chauvinism. Teaching that helps students develop clarified and reflective cultural group attachments helps them to demystify their own cultural groups, develop an awareness of them as separate cultural entities, and to understand their relationships with other cultural groups both within and outside this nation. Such teaching also helps students to understand how their cultural groups influence their behavior and how they shaped the development of American civilization. If these goals are attained, students will be able to objectively view both the functional and dysfunctional characteristics of their cultural groups.

## Cultural Influences on Learning

Students from diverse regional, social class, religious, ethnic, and racial groups often achieve at different levels in the common schools. Students from some groups tend to score better on standardized achievement tests and to experience more success than students who belong to other groups. For example, urban students in the Northwest tend to score better on standardized tests than rural students in the South: Mexican American youths have much higher school dropout rates than mainstream American youths.

A number of researchers are beginning to document how cultural differences can help explain some of the differential achievement scores across social class, ethnic, and cultural groups. Research by Cole and Bruner, Stodolsky and Lesser, and Ramirez and Castañeda indicates that culture influences learning, sometimes significantly.[16] Other researchers, such as Baratz, Shuy, and Lambert, have studied how the family languages of students place them at a disadvantage when they must learn concepts in the public language of the school rather than in the languages of their cultural communities.[17]

## Helping Students to Develop Self-Understanding

Most students come to school with little consciousness of how their cultures and lifestyles are unique and different from those of other American cultural groups. Because most American students attend school in largely homogeneous social class, religious, and ethnic communities, they often complete their common school experience without having any meaningful first-hand experiences with people from different social class, religious, racial, or ethnic groups. This is especially likely to be the case for middle and upper class mainstream American students. However, many poor youths who attend school in urban communities also have few opportunities to interact with individuals from other groups. Thus, most American youths remain largely culturally encapsulated throughout their experiences in the nation's schools.

An important goal of the school should be to help students develop keen insights into their own cultural groups and to better understand how those groups are both like and different from other American microcultures. One of the best ways to help students to better understand their own cultures is to help them to view their cultures through the lenses of other cultures. For example, mainstream American youths can better understand their own cultural values and behavior if they are juxtaposed with those of Jewish and Japanese Americans; Black and Jewish youths can also gain keen insights into their cultures by viewing them from the perspectives of others. By viewing their own through the lenses of other cultures, students will not only develop keener insights into the uniqueness of their own cultures, but will also better understand the similarities that characterize all human communities.

### National Identification

As important as it is for the school to reflect cultural democracy and to respect and understand the students' cultures, it is also vitally important for all American youths to develop a reflective and clarified national identification and a strong commitment to American political ideals. An important role of the schools is to help socialize youths so that they develop the attitudes, values, and competencies needed to fully participate in the nation's civic life.

To maintain a vigorous and healthy democracy, a nation must have a set of overarching idealized values to which all groups of its citizens must be committed. Myrdal described the overarching idealized values of our commonwealth as *the American Creed*, which includes equality, justice, liberty, and human dignity as core values.[18] As in every nation-state, there is a significant gap between our idealized national values and our societal practices. A major goal of each generation should be to help close the gap between our ideals and realities.

When the Republic was founded in 1776, the American Dream of equality and justice was limited primarily to white males with property. Yet, because of the cogency of the American Creed, various groups have used its tenets to justify their structural inclusion into the social, economic, and political life of the nation. Blacks, women, the handicapped, and various other groups have attained increasingly more equity through the years by political action for which the American Creed served as a basic tenet.

In his classic study published in 1944, *An American Dilemma*, Myrdal argues that the treatment of Blacks in the United States and the existence of the American Creed create an American dilemma in the consciences of most Americans.[19] Myrdal predicted that this American dilemma contained the seeds that would lead to the eradication of blatant segregation and racism in the South and to more racial equality.

The emergence of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and the crumbling of legalized segregation in the South supported Myrdal's hypothesis. However, his thesis is controversial in part because race relations remain a significant problem in the United States despite the real and symbolic gains of the 1960s. However, I believe, with Myrdal, that the American Creed is a cogent force in American society and that powerful ideals open up the possibility for social change that can increase equity and human rights.

Despite the power of Myrdal's thesis and his keen predictive insights, he does not adequately consider the other factors that motivate humans, along with national ideals. Ideals do not influence the behavior of individuals in a vacuum. They interact with an individual's self-interest and other motives. Overarching national ideals, such as those that constitute the American Creed, may win out in some situations, but they can and do lose in others. In most situations, self-interests conflict with the idealized values and goals of the commonwealth.

Yet, the American Dream still lives and is a cogent force in American life. Immigrants risk their lives almost daily to reach American shores so that they might share its legendary richness and political ideals. Since 1970, large numbers of immigrants have settled in the United States from such nations as Mexico, China, Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Haiti. However, the current economic crisis in our nation is severely challenging the American Dream, our democratic ideals, and the national will to cope. If present economic trends continue, the gap between the haves and the have-nots will reach crisis proportions. We will become two nations—one rich and one poor. The pernicious gap between the rich and the poor in many of the Third World nations makes us painfully aware of how rigid social class stratification can destroy dreams like those embedded in the American Creed. In his poem, "Harlem," Langston Hughes speaks of a deferred dream.[20]

*What Happens to a Dream Deferred*

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load
*Or does it explode*?
(Copyright 1951 by Langston Hughes. Reprinted from *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*, by Langston Hughes, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.)

### National Policy and Goals

Strengthening attachments to the nation-state and its idealized values, developing clearly articulated national policies, and gaining national consensus will considerably strengthen our nation and enable it to face current and future challenges. The United States is being stymied by fractionalized self-interest groups that are making contradictory demands on the commonwealth. No one speaks for the commonwealth. Consequently, it suffers enormously because no constituency is organized to promote the overarching interests of the nation-state.

My observations in Japan helped to convince me that a nation-state, to experience maximum economic growth and the potential to solve its major human problems, must have clearly delineated national policies in areas such as industrial growth, health, and education.[21] Japanese institutions usually have clearly specified goals and are operated with tremendous efficiency. Because of this, Japan has attained phenomenal economic, educational, and industrial growth since World War II. I was impressed by the ways that Japanese individuals shared and respected institutional goals and worked to achieve them. Japan has been able to develop a high level of consensus about overarching values and goals for the nation-state and to mobilize to attain them. While there are many complex reasons for Japan's success, its ability to attain a significant consensus on national goals is one of the most important.

Because our nation's history and culture are quite different from Japan's, we cannot reach consensus on national goals in the Japanese way. In the United States, diversity and individuality are two of our most salient and cherished characteristics. These characteristics have enriched our lives and continue to do so. Few Americans are willing to sacrifice them. However, our challenge is to attain some kind of delicate balance between the needs of individuals and special interest groups and the needs of the commonwealth. We have stressed individuality and diversity to the point that there is little national consensus about what should be the goals of governmental, industrial, health, and educational institutions. We need to build a consensus for a set of national goals and policies that are shared by diverse cultural and interest groups.

### The Problems with Americanization

Educational attempts to build reflective nationalism and consensus on national goals are likely to be greeted with strong skepticism and even hostility by some groups because of the history of Americanization movements in the United States.[22] The development of a strong national American identity is likely to be associated with forced assimilation, Anglo-conformity, the melting pot, and institutionalized racism.

Since the beginning of the Republic, the United States has been unique in that it allowed most immigrants to become American citizens by making a commitment to American political ideals. The mass culture and industrialization in the United States also gave immigrants rich opportunities to experience social and economic mobility, but they often had to abandon their ethnic characteristics in order to fully participate. Most immigrants found the attractiveness of American institutions and economic opportunities irresistible and forsook many, if not most, of their ethnic characteristics.

The ease with which immigrants could become citizens and the strong appeal of Americanization and America's industrialized culture does not tell the full story of ethnicity and Americanization in the United States. The essence of an American identity was and still is the acceptance of American political ideals. Yet, the English Americans so strongly influenced and dominated American institutions that cultural as well as physical appearances emerged as requisites for becoming complete American citizens who could participate fully in the nation's institutions.

By the turn of the century, immigrants from Europe could become legal citizens by declaring allegiance to American democratic ideals, but could become full participants in American life only by becoming culturally assimilated into the English-dominated culture. Most European immigrants chose full participation in the commonwealth over maintaining attachments to their ethnic roots. However, according to European-American scholars who led the "new pluralism" movement of the 1960s—such as Michael Novak and William Greenbaum—the Americanization process was often painful for European Americans.[23] Greenbaum maintains that American society, including the schools, eradicated the cultures and languages of immigrant groups by using shame and hope. The immigrants, argues Greenbaum, were taught to disrespect their own cultures but were given hope that once they were no longer ethnic they would gain full inclusion into the nation's industrialized society and enjoy all of the benefits of modernization and industrialization.

Despite the pain that Greenbaum and Novak associate with Americanization, European immigrants could become full Americans by swearing allegiance to American democratic ideals and becoming culturally similar to the English Americans. Yet, for decades Americans from non-white lands could not become full Americans even when they accepted American democratic ideals and became culturally assimilated. Most members of these groups diligently tried to become full Americans, assimilated, and structurally integrated into American society, but this was denied because of their physical characteristics. It is much more possible today than it was at the beginning of the civil rights movement in the 1950s for members of these groups to become full Americans and to acquire an American identification. However, we still have a great deal of work to do before Americans from all cultural, racial, and ethnic groups will have equal opportunities to enjoy the full benefits of American democracy.

### Building Nationalism in a Culturally Pluralistic Democracy

The United States, like other Western nations, has traditionally tried to create a cohesive, equitable, and modernized nation-state by establishing a secularized, scientific national culture. The liberal utopians who envision this kind of nation-state visualize a just and equitable society in which individuals from all cultural, ethnic, regional, and religious groups are able to fully participate. However, for this kind of equitable, modernized society to emerge and blossom, individuals must be freed of their communal, primordial, and cultural attachments.

Traditionalism, argues the liberal, is inconsistent with modernization and a technological culture. Traditional cultures promote historic prejudices, we-they attitudes, and cultural conflict. They also lead to the Balkanization of the nation-state. Traditionalism and cultural pluralism also stress group rights over the rights of the individual, and regard the group rather than the individual as primary.[24] In a modernized, equitable society, individual rights are paramount; group rights are secondary.

Liberals are also critical of traditionalism because, they maintain, it promotes inequality, racial and ethnic awareness, and group favoritism. As long as attachments to cultural and ethnic groups are salient and emphasized, argues the liberal assimilationist, they will serve as the basis for job and educational discrimination as well as other forms of exclusion that are inconsistent with American Creed values. The solution to this problem, argues the liberal modernist, is a common national culture into which all individuals assimilate and public policies that are neutral on questions of race and ethnicity. Government policies should neither support ethnic or primordial issues nor should they discourage them. Pluralism may remain in a modernized national culture, but it must be based on interests that cut across ethnic and primordial groups. Modernized pluralism is based on factors such as social class, education, and other voluntary and achieved affiliations.

The liberal expects traditional cultural ties and behavior in the enlightened, modernized society to die of their own weight. Give all ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural groups equal opportunities to participate in the modernized nation-state, and attachments to primordial cultures will disappear. If thick primordial cultures persist in a modernized society it is because of aberrations in the liberal solution and because inequality still exists. This constitutes a pathological condition. If you give Chicanos full opportunities to participate in American society, they will forget about bilingual education, ethnic rituals, and ethnic interests. The controversy over Black English will die when Blacks become full participants in the national culture.

As Apter perceptively states, the liberal assimilationist conception of the relationship between tradition and modernity is not so much wrong as it is incomplete, flawed, and oversimplified. The ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s and the quest for moral authority among our youths in recent years indicate that the liberal solution to the problem of traditionalism in a modernized society fails to fulfill some of the fundamental psychological, spiritual, and community needs of humans.

Dubois's conception of double-consciousness and the push-pull syndrome helps us to better understand the complex relationship of traditionalism and modernity in mass societies.[25] There is little doubt that the strong appeal of America's industrialized society, and its tremendous opportunities for economic and social mobility, have motivated most American groups to rid themselves of most aspects of their ethnic cultures and to become skeptical and ashamed of folk cultures and traditionalism. There has been and continues to be a tremendous push toward assimilation in the United States because of the strong appeal of social and economic mobility. Nevertheless, the push toward Americanization is counterbalanced by the trenchant pull of primordialism, traditionalism, and the search for moral authority and meaning in life that mass societies often leave unfulfilled. These counterbalancing factors, which pull individuals toward traditional cultures, have been much stronger in American society than is often acknowledged. They experienced a resurgence during the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Prior to the publication of Glazer and Moynihan's landmark book in 1963, *Beyond the Melting Pot*,[26] most American social scientists endorsed some version of the liberal assimilationist position, and assumed that cultural attachments, rapidly vanishing in American society, would in time totally disappear. Their disappearance from the nation would be a healthy and positive development. After all, when ethnicity and racial identifications disappeared from American society, equality would be a reality because individuals would be freed from the burden of primordial cultural attachments and ethnic affiliations. However, as Glazer and Moynihan perceptively point out in their influential book "[Ethnicity] is fixed deep in American life generally; the specific pattern of ethnic differentiation, however, in every generation is created by specific events."[27] Fishman, in his landmark book, *Language Loyalty in the United States*, comments on the cogency of Americanization, but notes the persistence of cultural attachments in American society:

> Theoretically, the American melting pot should have been more successful considering the rapid social mobility which it holds out as an explicit reward, the forces of urbanization and industrialization that support it, and the absence of well-defined or deeply-rooted American cultural patterns which might have conflicted with contrasting immigrant cultures. At the same time this lack of a substantive and traditional core culture may also conduce to a partial failure of the melting pot. . . . There are limits to the ability of larger-scale and more modern bonds and principles to solve the longings of mankind. *The primordial and the modern show a capacity to co-exist side by side, to adjust to each other, and to stimulate each other* [emphasis added].[28]

The liberal assimilationist position suggests that modernity and primordialism are contradictory forces and are inconsistent. Yet, as social scientists such as Apter and Fishman point out, primordialism and traditionalism co-exist in modernized and modernizing societies. They co-exist in part because of what the assimilationist calls "the pathological condition," i.e., ethnic groups such as Blacks and Mexican Americans maintain strong attachments to their ethnic groups and culture in part because they have been excluded from full participation in the nation's social, economic, and political institutions. However, many members of these ethnic groups—as well as members of ethnic groups such as Poles, Italians, and Jews—maintain ethnic affiliations and other cultural and regional attachments for more fundamental reasons. It helps them to fulfill some basic psychological and sociological needs that the thin culture of modernization leaves starving and to answer complex questions about moral authority that mass cultures are incapable of helping individuals to resolve.[29] Donald Oliver discusses the importance of the community in helping individuals to live meaningful lives:

> . . . ennui and emptiness . . . develops within people's lives, especially the lives of both the affluent and expendable classes, as they discover that status, convenience, and material affluence as well as secular intellectual and artistic expression will not satisfy the human longing to search for ultimate meaning. *This ultimate meaning must come from a moral order by community rituals [emphasis added]* . . . [Modern] people should have the option of living not simply in isolated families linked to corporate service agencies . . ., but should have available the possibility of living within real neighborhoods.[30]

Many individuals in highly modernized societies such as the United States also hold onto their primordial attachments because they help to satisfy communal and personal needs. Their shared cultures provide individuals with a sense of community in mass societies where they run the high risk of experiencing loneliness, anomie, moral confusion, and uncertainty. Cultural group memberships also provide individuals with a foundation for self-definition, and senses of belonging, of shared traditions, and interdependence of fate.

## Nationalism and Schooling

The United States, like most other nations, has traditionally tried to develop a strong nationalism in individuals by stressing the nation's strengths, highlighting the weaknesses of other nations, teaching about national heroes and myths, and trying to eradicate primordial cultures. A major assumption held by the modernists who dominate American educational policies is that ethnic and primordial cultures are antithetical to the goals of a modernized and industrialized nation.

The assimilationist liberal position that has historically dominated American national policies has been highly successful, in large part, because of the push resulting from the appeal of the rapid social and economic mobility in American society. Yet many individuals in American society still have tenacious attachments to their cultural groups, both because of historic discrimination and because of the personal, moral, spiritual, and psychological needs that modernized cultures leave unfulfilled.

Civic education that reflects cultural democracy has the most potential for helping individuals and groups to develop strong commitments to the overarching ideals of the nation-state and to become full participants in the nation's civic life. An educational policy that reflects cultural democracy should recognize that both traditionalism and modernity co-exist in modernized and modernizing nation-states and that individuals are capable of having multiple identifications. It is not necessary to alienate individuals from their cultures, neighborhoods, and communities in order to help them develop strong national loyalties. In fact, I believe that individuals must have positive, clarified, and reflective commitments and identifications with their cultural groups before they can develop reflective and positive identifications with the national culture. Goodlad calls this phenomenon "the philosophy of self-transcendence." He writes, "The philosophy of self-transcendence argues that strong feelings of self-worth are prerequisite to and perhaps instrumental in acquiring close identification with others."[31]

When the school fails to respect and/or recognize the cultures of students, it is very difficult for them to feel a part of the national culture taught in the school. Individuals and groups who do not feel part of the national culture are likely to focus on particularistic concerns and issues and not on the issues and problems of the commonwealth. Thus the school, by becoming a culturally democratic community, can help students from diverse cultures to develop a commitment to national values and concerns by respecting, acknowledging, and understanding their diverse cultures.

Berger and Neuhaus argue that the school often alienates students from their cultures and teaches them contempt for it. They maintain that it is important for the school to help empower what they call "mediating structures," such as the family, neighborhood, and community, in order to strengthen the national civic culture. They define mediating structures as those "institutions standing between the individual in his private life and the large institutions of public life."[32] Berger and Neuhaus argue that individuals often find public institutions such as schools alienating. They write:

> For the individual in modern society, life is an ongoing migration between two spheres, public and private. The mega-structures are typically alienating, that is, they are not helpful in providing meaning and identity for individual existence. . . . One of the most debilitating results of modernization is a feeling of powerlessness in the face of institutions controlled by those whom we do not know and those values we often do not share.[33]

## Global Identifications: Problems and Promises

Effective citizenship education mandates that we help students to develop the skills, attitudes, and abilities needed to function effectively within the world community. Students are not only citizens of their communities and the nation-state; they are also citizens of a global society.[34] However, while most students have conscious identification with their communities and nation-states, often they are only vaguely aware of their status as world citizens. Most American students do not have a comprehensive understanding of the full implications of their world citizenship.

There are many complex reasons why American students often have little awareness or understanding of their status as world citizens and rarely think of themselves as citizens of a world community. This results partly from the fact that the United States, like most other nation-states, focuses on helping students to develop nationalism rather than on helping them to understand their roles as citizens of the world. The teaching of nationalism often results in students learning misconceptions, stereotypes, and myths about other nations and developing negative and confused attitudes toward them.

Students also have limited awareness of their roles as world citizens because of the nature of the world community itself. The institutions that attempt to formulate policies for the international community—or for groups of nations, such as the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, and the Organization of American States—are usually weak because of their inability to enforce their policies and recommendations, because of the strong nationalism manifested by their members, and because the international community does not have an effectively mobilized and politically efficacious constituency. Strong nationalism makes most international bodies weak and largely symbolic.

Students find it difficult to view themselves as members of an international community not only because it lacks efficacious governmental bodies, but also because there are few heroes, myths, symbols, and school rituals that are designed to help students develop an attachment and identification with the global community. It is difficult for students to develop identifications with a community that does not have heroes and rituals in which they participate and benefits that can be identified, seen, and touched. If we are serious about helping students to develop global attachments and identifications, we need to identify and/or create international heroes and school rituals.

When educators attempt to help students develop more sophisticated international understanding and identification, they often experience complex problems. It is difficult to gain public support for programs in international education because many parents view global education as an attempt to weaken national loyalty and to undercut traditional American values. Many teachers are likely to view global education as an add-on to an already crowded curriculum and to assign it a low priority. Some teachers, like many of their students, have misconceptions and negative attitudes toward other nations and are likely to perpetuate them in the classroom.

## Goals for Global Education

When formulating goals and instructional strategies for global education, educators should be cognizant of the societal and pedagogical constraints. However, they should realize that it is vitally important for today's students to develop a sophisticated understanding of their roles in the world community. Students should also understand how life in their communities influences other nations and the cogent impact that international events have on their daily lives. Global education should have as major goals helping students to develop an understanding of the interdependence among nations in the modern world, developing clarified attitudes toward other nations, and developing a reflective identification with the world community. This latter task is likely to be especially difficult because of the highly ambiguous nature of the international community and the tight national boundaries that exist throughout the world.

## Balanced Identifications and Schooling

Cultural and national identifications may prevent the development of effective global commitments and the cooperation among nations that is essential to help resolve the world's problems.[35] Nationalism and national attachments in most nations of the world are strong and tenacious. Strong nationalism that is non-reflective will prevent students from developing reflective and positive global identifications. Non-reflective and unexamined cultural attachments may prevent the development of a cohesive nation with clearly delineated national goals and policies. While we need to help students to develop reflective and clarified cultural identifications, they must also be helped to clarify and strengthen their identifications as American citizens—which means that they will internalize American Creed values and develop commitments to act on them.

*Students need to develop a delicate balance of cultural, national, and global identifications and attachments*. However, educators often try to help students develop strong national identifications by eradicating their primordial cultures and making them ashamed of their families, folk cultures, and folk beliefs. Civic education in a pluralistic democracy should recognize that students must function both in their private worlds and in the civic community. Effective civic education must also reflect the fact that tradition and modernity co-exist in industrialized nation-states and that both tradition and modernity help students to satisfy important human needs.

I believe that cultural, national, and global identifications are developmental in nature and that an individual can attain a healthy and reflective national identification; and that individuals can develop a reflective and positive global identification only after they have a realistic, reflective, and positive national identification.

Individuals can develop a clarified commitment to and identification with a nation-state and the national culture only when they believe that they are a meaningful part of the nation-state and that it acknowledges, reflects, and values their culture and them as individuals. A nation-state that alienates and does not structurally include all cultural groups into the national culture runs the risk of creating alienation and causing groups to focus on particularistic concerns and issues rather than on the overarching goals and policies of the commonwealth.

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# 1983

## PROMISE AND PARADOX: CHALLENGES TO GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

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This presidential address was presented on November 24, 1983 to the 63rd Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at San Francisco, California. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 48 (April 1984): 240-243, 297-299. ERIC Number: EJ 316 056.

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# 1983

## Promise and Paradox: Challenges to Global Citizenship

*Carole L. Hahn*

The NCSS Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines (1979) assert that the purpose of social studies is "to prepare students to be rational, humane, participating citizens in a world that is increasingly interdependent." In order to fulfill that function, citizenship education must emphasize reflective thinking and problem solving from a global perspective.

However, the prevailing concept of "citizenship education" continues to be one of knowledge transmission for nationalistic goals—that is, giving students information about our nation's history, geography, government, and economy. Meanwhile, those of us who believe that citizenship education should not be limited to "giving information" or to nationalist content just keep talking to each other, and hope that somehow, while we are talking, change will occur "out there." Yet, it doesn't.

The traditional image of citizenship education persists. The belief that one should train young people to be good citizens by giving them lots of information about their country is everywhere. Just observe a typical classroom or examine a typical textbook: the teacher lectures, the book describes, and the students receive, then review. Listen to the members of state boards of education and state legislatures talk about citizenship education—"What our students need are more courses about America," many of them say—or look at the recent reports on the need for excellence in education—they, too, recommend more courses in United States history, in United States government, and in western civilization.

The trouble is that if students do not get some practice in reflective inquiry and decision making about global issues, they simply will not be prepared for their citizenship role. The problem of inadequate citizenship education for the future demands a broader view of citizenship education now. The solution to that problem involves both redefining citizenship education and developing programs to fit that new concept.

Clearly, I am not the first to call for citizenship education which emphasizes critical analysis and decision making. Nor am I alone in calling for citizenship for the Global Age. The problem is not that no one has thought about these needs before or written about them or "preached" about them. The problem is that our words have had little effect on practice and that time for making needed changes is running out. Because the future is so qualitatively different from the past, and because the world is changing so rapidly, we must make changes now.

I find these days that I often have an eerie feeling that I am already living in the future. It reminds me of the strange sense one gets on the other side of the international dateline. I distinctly remember the feeling in Tokyo on July 11th, when one of the members of our NCSS group reminded us that our "today" was "tomorrow" for our friends back home; for them, it was July 10. I find myself feeling like that often. We are now living in the future of the science fiction we used to read. Dick Tracy's television wristwatch, robots replacing workers, and laser surgery—they are all part of our daily lives. Even the doublespeak of Orwell's *1984* (and the year itself) is upon us. The year 2000 and the 21st century are just around the corner.

Margaret Mead advised us that "recognizing that the future is now gives us a way to reshape our thinking. . . [that is] we must place the future like the unborn child in the womb of a woman, within a community of men, women, and children . . . already to be nourished . . . and protected, already in need of things for which if they are not prepared before it is born, it will be too late" (Mead, 1970, p. 97).

Clearly, the future is here. Are we ready for it? Are our students ready for it?

## New Age Challenges

Let us look at the New Age—the future-in-the-present—and let us reflect upon the challenges it offers for citizenship education. The prophets and the books of the era include Alvin Toffler and *The Third Wave,* John Naisbitt and *Megatrends*, Robert Reich and *The Next American Frontier*, Barbara Ward and *The Global 2000 Report to the President*, and the Brandt Commission Reports on the North/South division of the "have" and "have-not" nations of the world. These prophets and their books tell us of new technologies, new relationships between the United States and the rest of the world, and new planetwide conditions. In the background we can hear the chorus chanting the Litany of the New Age, "Promise and Paradox."

First, the new technologies. In communication: fiber optics, satellites, and computers combine to put us instantaneously in touch with people all over the world. Already, you and I can direct-dial almost anywhere from our home phones. Jim Becker says it's as if all the world were sitting in front of a giant TV screen; we watch the English, Israelis, and Koreans on our evening news and they are watching us on their television news (Becker, 1983).

Technology has collapsed the "information float," or the time it takes to communicate one piece of information from one place to another, and that has revolutionized every aspect of life. Banking has essentially become information in motion, as transactions move around the world at the speed of light (Naisbitt, 1982, p. 91) and huge transactions occur overnight while you and I sleep.

Further, our technologies have accelerated the knowledge explosion. We are told that in the next few years all known data will double every 20 months (Naisbitt, 1982, p. 24). With computers and microprocessors, all of that data can now be stored and retrieved instantaneously. Instant communication, globally! Together, they hold the promise of all humankind's resources being applied to solve global problems. Paradoxically, though, information is not wisdom; and speeding messages can bring not only solutions but also they can propel us into disasters before we have time to realize what has happened. Promise and Paradox. Most importantly, are we asking ourselves and our students, "Which will it be?"

Similarly, other technological changes offer both the promise of progress and the contradiction of disaster. On the one hand, by using computers to teach basic skills, teachers could be freed to stimulate problem solving and value analysis. With robots to do dangerous and monotonous work, humans could be freed to use their intelligence in more creative employment. On the other hand, these "advances" could move civilization backwards. The affluent with home computers could keep their children out of the pluralistic schools, away from value analysis. The unemployed workers, displaced by robots, could sit idly and passively in front of their television sets, the antithesis of creativity. The Promise. The Paradox. Are we asking ourselves and our students whether we are choosing to move forward or backwards?

The prophets of the New Age tell us not only of challenges from technology; they tell us also about challenges from America's changing position relative to the rest of the world (Reich, 1983).

- America's per capita real gross national product is now lower than that of Japan, Germany, France and Italy.

- Our standard of living trails that of Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, and Switzerland. (It has even declined relative to where we used to be! From 1968 to 1981, real wages of the average American worker declined by 20 percent.)
- Our life expectancy rate trails that of 14 other countries.
- We rate higher than other industrialized nations in infant mortality, air pollution, and unemployment.
- We have lost our comparative advantage in many industries. Southeast Asia has replaced both the United States and Japan in producing textiles, steel, and small appliances.

The big question is: Do we have the will to readjust industries, to retrain individuals, and to reconceptualize our national identity? The Promise is of rebirth. The Paradox is that these may turn out to be the signs of death, instead. Are we preparing youth for either?

The prophets of the New Age tell us of deteriorating conditions on our planet, as well as in our nation. We are using up nonrenewable resources; we are polluting our atmosphere; and we are destroying forests, soils, and other species at alarming rates. All of that is aggravated by a continually exploding population.

In less than 15 years the world's population will likely increase by 50 percent. Imagine the 4 1/2 billions of people today. Then, think of half of those being added to the billions already riding the planet. Each minute, 172 people are being added to our world population. Most of that growth will occur in the poorest countries where food, housing, and health care are already inadequate.

*The Global 2000 Report* and the Brandt Commission reports warn us of those grim probabilities in the hope that we will decide now to lessen the horror. All of these predictions of the near future and descriptions of the present are changeable. There are alternative futures still. Some are better; some worse. Which alternatives become reality depend on individual and collective decisions made by citizens all over the world. The question for us as citizenship educators is, "Will today's youth be able to tackle these problems with sufficient knowledge, compassion, and wisdom?"

The answer is a resounding "no," if the primary preparation for dealing with social issues is through the current social studies curriculum. All that we know (Superka, et al., 1980; Shaver, et al., 1979) about what is happening in most social studies classrooms tells us that instruction is dominated by a "factual" descriptive approach, not a social inquiry orientation. In other words, very few students are grappling with issues, alternatives are not investigated, and consequences are not weighed. Further, little attention is paid to the global aspects of social concerns.

## Citizenship Education Today

You may recall the article in *Social Education* last year in which members of NCSS and of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development responded to a survey about world issues. Most of the respondents said that nuclear disarmament and pollution of the earth's atmosphere were important issues facing humankind; yet, few felt the topics were adequately dealt with in schools (Molnar, 1983).

While that was not a systematic sample, similar findings have been obtained in other studies. In a carefully drawn national sample of elementary and secondary principals, almost all of the 2000 administrators said that global education was either important, or very important. But only 2 percent of the principals felt that their schools were doing a satisfactory job of developing a global perspective in students (Morehouse, 1983).

The mandated course requirements in our various states and school systems tell a similar story. The most frequently required social studies courses continue to be United States history, United States government or civics, and the Free Enterprise System. Even when courses are titled "Citizenship" or "Economics," they still emphasize the structure and function of United States government and the American economic system.

With respect to emphasizing nationalistic citizenship, the United States is not alone. The social studies curriculum in most countries is limited to citizenship education from that nation's perspective. Moreover, where world history and world geography are taught, they reach fewer students and they reinforce ethnocentric views. In addition, they convey an inaccurate picture of nations and regions as separate entities not connected one to another. Most importantly, these courses offer too few insights into enduring, persistent, global issues.

Further, what little global instruction most students do receive is too little and too late. Single courses in international relations cannot sufficiently inform students about the breadth of complex issues, especially when we know that secondary school is too late to change firmly established attitudes that "there is us; and there is them."

Moreover, the problems with citizenship education in this country and abroad are not limited to narrow nationalistic content. Citizenship education today is also grossly inadequate because of the form of instruction. Citizens will not learn how to tackle complex economic, social, and environmental problems by passively absorbing information from teachers and textbooks, by answering recall questions, or even by airing their opinions about current events. Yet, that is what numerous reports tell us goes on in classrooms in the United States (Superka, et al., 1980). In this respect, citizenship education in other nations is no better.

## Inadequate Reform

Clearly, current practices are not adequate to prepare youth to meet the challenges of global issues. With the recent attention to the need for educational reform, we would hope that improvements would be recommended in citizenship education. The numerous reports, however, fall far short of what is needed. On the one hand, the reports do acknowledge that the world is changing rapidly; but then they turn around and recommend solutions that do not fit the changes.

For example, the Carnegie Commission report says "the world has become a more crowded, more interconnected, more volatile place . . . [education should] help students see beyond themselves and better understand the interdependent nature of our world. . . " (Boyer, 1983, p. 4). Further, "the time has come," the report says, "to link the curriculum to a changing national and global context" (p. 7).

*A Nation At Risk* says, "The time is long past when America's destiny was assured simply by an abundance of natural resources and inexhaustible human enthusiasm, and by our relative isolation from the malignant problems of older civilizations. The world is indeed one global village" (Gardner, 1983, p. 6). Further, "for our country to function, citizens must be able to reach some common understandings on complex issues" (p. 7).

However, once having acknowledged that there are pressing global issues, and that an improved educational system must include three years of high school social studies, all of the reports fall far short of recommending an adequate course of citizenship preparation.

Even the enlightened Carnegie Commission report proceeds to recommend one year of *United States* history, one year of *American* government, one year of *western* civilization, and only one semester of study about a single-nonwestern nation! Only the Goodlad report says anything at all about elementary school. Where will students learn to wrestle with issues involving worldwide malnutrition and recession, environmental contamination and human rights violations, or the worldwide changes in the roles of women and men? We know that problem-solving skills practiced on mathematical problems do not automatically transfer to social issues. We know that practice in tackling global problems cannot be omitted from high school on the assumption that it was done sufficiently in elementary school. Nor can we delay that task until a student enrolls in the senior project recommended by the Carnegie Commission; students will not be able to comprehend, much less resolve, those problems on their own, if they have not had in-depth study of global issues and constant practice in reflective inquiry and problem solving throughout their school years.

Clearly, the New Age offers challenges to citizenship education which are not being met by current practice. The would-be reformers of 1983 are not offering satisfactory proposals. What of our profession? Can we take the lead in closing the gap between what is and what should be?

So far, the social studies professionals have been unable to reach a consensus on what citizenship education ought to be so that we can offer a clear alternative to the present situation. I think our inability to reach a consensus may stem from our western socialization. We have been taught to see the world in sets of dichotomies—things must be one thing *or* another. The Asian cultures tend to see the world in terms of yin and yang, opposing forces which complement one another to form a rich whole. We could benefit from viewing even our own field of social studies in terms of contributions from complementary forces.

Can we not reject indoctrination, yet still transmit democratic values by consciously deciding to practice equity, justice, and rationality in our classes in the hopes that youth will come to hold those values? Cannot such transmission through modeling be combined with reflective inquiry into enduring issues and with the use of the most powerful concepts and the processes of knowledge-testing from history and the social sciences? Cannot citizenship education prepare one to be both a national citizen, and a citizen of the global society? Can it not be both critical investigation and socialization (in the sense, again, of learning from models to value equity, justice, and rationality?)

I cannot raise those questions without acknowledging gratitude to the founders of our profession for clarifying for us the distinctions between those elements. However, it is time to move on past insistence on dichotomies and the building of "straw men" or "straw people" positions which can be knocked down by implying that negative extremes are inherent in the other "camps." It is time to put our energies into implementing citizenship education which uses the positive features contributed by each tradition to form a richer whole—citizenship education which is capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

So, how can we get from where we are to where we want to be with social studies as citizenship preparation? I see two kinds of tasks before us. First, we must convince ourselves and the public that it is time to redefine citizenship education. Secondly, we must redesign our programs to fit the new needs.

## Redefining Citizenship Education

First, as I have said, we must redefine citizenship education so that social studies includes preparation for one's role in a global society. We must remember, and we must remind others, that there is nothing inherently national about the term "citizenship." The concept of "citizenship" in the ancient Greek city states predated the phenomena called "nationalism" by hundreds of years! Just as the spread of nationalism since the eighteenth century caused people to rethink the meaning of "citizen," so now it is once again time to rethink that concept in light of our global interdependence. Like it or not, each of us riding on this planet is affected by one another's decisions and actions. We share a common destiny and, to an increasing extent, we even share a common culture. Although most of us do not realize it, it is a reality that we are participants in a global society. It is time that we become self-conscious about that participation—about our citizenship role. It is time, also, that we deliberately prepare youth for their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the global society, as well as of their nations and local communities.

As we insist on this broader definition of citizenship and of preparation for it, we will have to confront some widely accepted beliefs. We will have to convince people that national loyalty and national identity will not be sacrificed. Just as being a citizen of the United States does not diminish my citizenship in Decatur, Georgia, neither will my national citizenship be sacrificed to a global identification. Last year at this time, James Banks showed us how ethnic, national, and global identifications can in fact enrich one another (Banks, 1983). We have each had the experience of appreciating our homeland more as a result of traveling to other places and cultures. Clearly, becoming a global citizen does not make me un-American, and it will not have that effect on my students either. You and I may have to say that to our school boards and to our legislators.

As we insist on this broader definition of citizenship education we are also going to have to confront the censors and those who want us to transmit a set of "right answers" or an image of a neat, resolved world. We are going to have to insist that if citizens are going to be able to tackle complex issues, then youth will have to have practice in examining the unresolved, often controversial, issues of society. Particularly in a democratic society which rests on the idea that no topic is taboo for investigation, educators must resist even their own inclinations to self-censor, or to avoid controversial topics.

## Redesigning Social Studies

Thus, redefining citizenship education to mean preparation for global, as well as for national and local citizenship, and to mean practice in examining complex, often controversial issues is one task. The second task is to redesign our programs to fit the needs of the New Age and to implement the broader definition. Lee Anderson proposes that citizens of the Global Age need to be competent in four areas: They need competence in perceiving their involvement in a global society, competence in making decisions, competence in reaching judgments, and competence in exercising influence (Anderson, 1979, pp. 343-66).

These needed skills suggest both the content and the processes of an adequate social studies program. In order to develop competence in perceiving their involvement in the global society, students will need to understand that they belong to one culture among many and one species among many, and that with other cultures they share a common planet, a common destiny, and a common history. Out of this understanding will come, also, an appreciation for diversity within the global society.

Competence in making decisions will require that students regularly practice identifying alternatives, considering the perspectives of others, and hypothesizing about consequences across time and space. Competence in reaching judgments requires students to draw on the wisdom of all humankind for insights into problems and solutions. It requires, also, that students master the skills of social scientific inquiry and value analysis.

Competence in exercising influence requires that students regularly practice identifying alternatives, considering the perspectives of others, and hypothesizing about consequences across time and space. Competence in reaching judgments requires students to draw on the wisdom of all humankind for insights into problems and solutions. It requires, also, that students master the skills of social scientific inquiry and value analysis.

Competence in exercising influence requires that students learn that in one's lifestyle, work, and social and political activity, one can influence the quality of life in one's community, nation, and in the global society.

As westerners, we are used to thinking in linear terms with desired outputs from a system. Consequently, the competencies image is helpful in designing social studies programs. An eastern image also provides insights for program planning. In his book *Thoughts On Man*, Mr. K. Matsushita proposes that "shuchi" be the basis for education, work, and international relations. "Shuchi" is a Japanese word meaning "the wisdom of the many." Shuchi occurs when two people discuss and learn from one another's insight. Each one extends the limits of his or her own individual knowledge, experience, and wisdom. Ultimately, shuchi is the accumulation of all such interactions all over the world and throughout time. It would, thus, in total be the wisdom of all human history. Shuchi can exist, then, at different levels. But it is not automatic. If two people, or two nations, cling to their own opinions without trying to understand and benefit from the wisdom of the other, it cannot occur. In order to comprehend the other's view, one must understand the other's perspective; I believe the Japanese would ask us to understand the other's true nature (Matsushita, 1975). We might call it perspective-taking or perspective-consciousness (Torney, 1979; Hanvey, 1982).

I find this idea terribly exciting because we are living at a time when the ultimate shuchi is possible. Our new technologies of computers, satellites, and fiber optics allow us to store, retrieve, and share the accumulated knowledge from all peoples. In addition, we have the motivation to work for the common good for all humanity now that we know that we can destroy this planet through nuclear holocaust, environmental destruction, and greed. Barbara Ward said the motivation "beginning in fear can precisely be the realization that in a shared biosphere, no one will escape nuclear destruction, and that loyalty can be built, from however small a beginning, from a shared effort to keep that biosphere in a life creating, life enhancing, and a life preserving state" (Ward, 1979, p. 273).

Global citizenship in the 21st century, then, offers us the promise of ultimate shuchi. It begins with two children learning from one another's insights. It is developed through classroom investigation and discussion of issues as individuals acquire greater knowledge than they could alone. It is nurtured as young citizens practice taking on the perspective of others and they develop a sense of compassion. The result is greater wisdom for the individual and for the community. Knowledge, compassion, and wisdom—these are the essential goals of citizenship education for the future.

## Supporting Research

Whether we think in terms of competencies or shuchi, we have a new image of citizenship education. It is not just an abstract ideal or a philosophic argument. It is supported by research. Studies have documented the benefits of such an approach.

- Children who study about other cultures, in grades 1-3, and who learn about the similarities of people, or human unity, as well as about diversity, are less ethnocentric than children without such early experience (Mitsakos, 1978).
- Students in upper elementary school have the capability to take on the perspective of others, and to do problem solving with consideration of alternatives and consequences. But these abilities can only be developed through practice (Torney, et al., 1979).
- Students, for the most part, say social studies is boring and irrelevant to them. However, they also say they are interested in studying

international issues, and that they would like social studies better if it gave them more of an opportunity to discuss global issues (Remy, 1972).

- Secondary students who discuss controversial issues in an open supportive environment are more supportive of democratic principles; they are less authoritarian, have more political interest, and have more confidence that citizens can make a difference than do students who have not discussed controversial issues regularly (Torney, et al., 1975, Ehman, 1977, Hahn & Avery, 1984).
- Students who frequently discuss ethical dilemmas reason at higher levels than they did prior to the discussions. There is, recently, even some small bit of research indicating that people who are capable of reasoning at the higher levels are more likely to apply abstract democratic beliefs to specific situations (Eyler, 1981), and are more likely to think independently and show concern for others in the face of pressures to conform.

As the 21st century draws near, there are new challenges for citizens: challenges from new technologies, challenges from our nation's changed position in the world, and challenges from the deteriorating state of our planet. The current social studies curriculum is not adequate to give students the knowledge and the problem-solving abilities they will need to tackle the dilemmas citizens will face. So far the educational reformers from the Carnegie Commission to the leaders in social studies have not proposed adequate solutions to this problem.

The time has come for us to insist on a broader concept of citizenship education. We must assert that youth need to be prepared for global as well as for national and local citizenship. We must assert, also, that such preparation requires practice in examining complex, controversial issues.

The time has come, also, for us to redesign our social studies programs—to develop competencies needed by citizens of the New Age and to enable youth to practice shuchi.

## Actions To Be Taken

What does this mean specifically for each of us? It means we have five kinds of tasks before us:

First—It means that each of us needs to do much reading about global issues and much reading from the perspectives of people in other nations and cultures. Each of us needs to daily check himself or herself to be sure that we are fostering reflective inquiry and decision making with a global perspective.

Second—It means that when we write or select textbooks, serve on curriculum committees, or plan inservice meetings, we are careful to ensure that from kindergarten through adulthood, programs develop a global perspective and problem-solving abilities. Since the development of knowledge, of attitudes, and of abilities is cumulative, no grade, no course, no classroom can be exempt.

Third—It means that individually and collectively we must work for an environment that supports such learning. We must do a better job of informing the public, boards of education, and our legislators. The new NCSS government relations network and the 1984 emphasis on Affirmation of the Social Studies are good steps in this direction.

Fourth—It means that we must be eternally vigilant against outside pressures to censor materials and topics, and we must resist our own inclinations to avoid controversial issues because we know that to give in even "just this once" is a step toward totalitarian thought control.

And finally, it means that as a professional organization we need to practice reflective inquiry and a global perspective ourselves. We need to develop cross-national publications and initiate cross-national research. We need to hold international conferences every five years or so which would let us practice shuchi with social studies educators all over the world. NCSS is just now initiating efforts in that direction; there is much to be done!

These are Times of Promise as well as Times of Paradox. I do not want us to look back on the 1980s as Simone de Beauvoir did on a period in her life when she said "the use I made of my freedom was to fail to appreciate the truth of the time in which I was living" (de Beauvoir, 1975).

Rather, as we look to the future, and the desperate need for world peace and respect for human rights, let us each do what he or she can to develop global citizens who possess knowledge, compassion, and wisdom. Let us act on the words of the great spiritual:

"Let there be Peace on Earth . . . and Let it Begin with Me."

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# 1984

# A VIEW FROM THE CLASSROOM

*Jean Craven*

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**This presidential address was presented on November 17, 1984 to the 64th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Washington, D.C. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 49 (April 1985): 331-332, 340-342. ERIC Number: EJ 332 263.**

# 1984

## A View from the Classroom

*Jean Craven*

I chose as the title of this year's presidential address "A View from the Classroom" for several reasons:

- If we want to know the status of social studies in this country, it is important to know the vision of social studies held by teachers, and the frustrations encountered by teachers in translating that vision into practice. It is also important to gain some view of the effectiveness of social studies instruction as perceived and demonstrated by students.
- It is appropriate that a presidential address be devoted to a look at the status of social studies in the classroom because the focus of NCSS activity in this decade has been and will be the clarification and improvement of social studies at the classroom level.
- A social studies program evaluation in my own district, the findings of which are consistent in most respects with major research studies conducted throughout the country in the past few years, provides interesting data to enlighten our view. In the case of our evaluation, some of the comments and responses made by teachers and students to open-ended questions are distressing, some are heartening—and all are helpful as we assess what we are doing well and what remains to be done.

The program evaluation, which took place during the 1983-1984 school year in Albuquerque Public Schools, addressed four aspects of our district's program: goals of the program, content and sequencing of courses, methods and materials used in social studies classes, and effectiveness of the program. I will highlight here some of our findings, especially those that seem reflective of many classrooms and school districts throughout the country, and comment on what I think that means for social studies programs in the eighties.

*Goals* are an important part of a social studies program. They furnish direction for the program, help the public and educators to understand the rôle and significance of social studies in the whole school program, and they serve as a basis for evaluation. In our district—and this was no surprise, because other research had indicated similar findings elsewhere—there was high agreement among teachers, students, parents and administrators that goals related to citizenship transmission were regarded as the most important goals of the social studies program. The individual goal rated first or second by nearly every group surveyed was the goal of understanding and appreciating American values, institutions, and ways of life. Teachers and students rated the goal of understanding the histories, traditions, values, institutions and characteristics of countries and cultures throughout the world as high or higher, while parents and administrators rated it nearly as high. Goals related to personal development were rated high by elementary teachers and elementary administrators and were considered moderately important by other groups. The group of goals related to active participation in society and critically examining society was considered at least moderately important to all groups, but parents rated them higher than other groups. This is important information, because many teachers believe that parents do not want teachers to spend much time on the critical examination of society or on active participation in society. They believe that parents want them to teach facts and stay away from controversial issues. In fact, teaching facts and concepts and teaching the methods of history and the social sciences were rated relatively lower by all groups. When we asked which of these goals parents, teachers, students and administrators believed were being achieved, we learned that almost every group surveyed agreed that we do at least a moderately good job of achieving the citizenship transmission goals—which they believed to be very important—and that we do a good job of teaching facts and concepts, which they believe to be one of the least important of our goals.

Questions about the importance of social studies in the school program confirmed statements in the recent national commission reports; nearly every person surveyed said that social studies was absolutely essential or very important. Compared with other subjects, however, students rated social studies behind mathematics, language arts and science when asked what subjects they prefer. Nevertheless, when we asked high school students to name the course in any subject area they felt had been most valuable to them, far more students named a social studies course than any other. It appears that students may not always like their social studies courses, but many recognize their value. A majority of the other courses named by students as most valuable could be linked to future occupational goals.

Throughout the design of the study and the interpretation of results, we talked frequently with teachers about goals and their place in a social studies program. I concluded that teachers focus their attention largely on what they are trying to teach at their grade level or in their course; they are not very much concerned with goals of an entire social studies program. In fact, most teachers do not think in terms of a social studies *program* with goals that each course and grade level help to achieve. From my perspective, there is a great need for teachers, administrators, parents and students to accept the idea of a social studies program with goals that must be achieved over time, with important contributions from teachers at every grade level. Teachers of history must be able to speak not only of the importance of history but also of the importance of history as a part of a strong social studies program. And as standards for history, government, geography, economics and other social studies disciplines are established, there is a need to consider how each contributes to the achievement of important social studies goals. We need to raise our sights beyond objectives to goals, so that everyone will know *why* we teach what we teach.

The current portion of our program evaluation addressed primarily the question, "What should a student learn in grades K-12 in order to receive a complete social studies education? In what sequence should the learning take place?"

Would you think that my school district is very different from most school districts throughout the country if I told you we could find almost no one who would venture to say what students should study at each level to achieve an ideal social studies program? Most teachers described what students should learn at their own level only, not venturing to say what should be learned at other levels. Where teachers, administrators and parents did indicate what they thought students should learn at the various levels, the responses were as varied as can be imagined. My own observation about this situation is that it is more serious than one might think. If all of us—teachers, administrators and parents—do not share a vision of what should be, how will we build support for the program we need?

One finding in our study was distressing, if not surprising: elementary teachers reported that they spend an average of 108 minutes a week on social studies. We noted that the range of time was very wide; some teachers report that they spend no time on social studies while others report that they spend as much as 250 minutes a week. I suspect that the most frequently mentioned number was approximately 60 minutes a week, which means that many teachers teach social studies about 12 minutes a day, or they teach it twice a week for 30 minutes, or perhaps that social studies is taught on a sporadic basis. Other studies have indicated that this figure is similar to the time spent on social studies in other elementary schools throughout the country. Elementary teachers often say that they haven't sufficient time to teach social studies and that no one can tell whether they teach it or omit it from their programs. These teachers note that their students do well on standardized tests that purport to measure social studies if they can read well—they see no relationship between the items in the social studies sections of these tests and the instructional program outlined in their curriculum guides or covered in their textbooks. Though these teachers believe that a child who has had instruction in social studies is indistinguishable from one who has not, our study indicates that a majority of middle school teachers report that students entering middle school are not well prepared. This means that middle school teachers must deviate from the curriculum they are expected to teach in order to teach what students should have learned in elementary classrooms and cannot achieve what is expected at their levels. In addition to the problems inherent in building a program on an inconsistent base, any research indicating that certain concepts must be taught early if they are to be taught well may not be translated into practice in our classrooms.

A third part of our program evaluation addresses methods and materials used in social studies instruction. We found that textbooks are the teaching materials most frequently used at every grade level and in every course, but they are used along with a variety of other materials, all of which are in short supply. We often hear complaints of a textbook-centered curriculum, but textbooks are the only materials many teachers can count on school districts to supply. Responses to open-ended questions led us to believe that textbooks serve a variety of purposes and frequently serve purposes not always recognized. Students told us that teachers don't always convey to them very well an overview of the course but the textbook does. The teacher provides only a day-to-day view, but the textbook provides a long-range view. Students also say that a textbook gives them a greater sense of control over their success in a class; if they are absent or fail to understand something, they can be sure they will have the means to try again. Parents use textbooks to have some idea of what their children are expected to learn and to help them if they are not doing well. Teachers report that their primary resource for deciding what to teach is the textbook. Many reported that they do not ask students to read textbooks; instead, they ask students to use textbooks as a source of information because many textbooks are not interesting to read. All groups rated textbooks about B– or C+. This figure does not represent an average of lots of books rated A and lots of books rated F; almost no book received an A or an F, and nearly all books were rated by the teachers who used them as B or C. Books were rated high on accuracy and comprehensiveness, but nearly every book was rated low on interest to students. Very few teachers could name a better book. We devised the notion of the textbook as teddy bear; that is, textbooks are viewed as objects of comfort to students, teachers, parents, and administrators. The textbook, like a teddy bear, doesn't have to be very lively as a source of comfort.

With respect to teaching methods, most teachers reported using a combination of lecture and discussion as the most frequently used method of instruction. Students often said that they would teach the course the same way their teacher does if they were teaching the course, but a substantial minority said they would use methods that require more student activity and involvement. As I thought about the methods that teachers reported using, as I looked at the various measures of program effectiveness, it seemed to me that teachers were accomplishing very well a program goal that was rated as less important than other goals—teaching facts and concepts—and that the methods being used were the most efficient in accomplishing that goal. We don't do as well on goals that require the *application* of facts and concepts (i.e., participation in government and society, analysis of public issues). But then, neither classroom evaluation nor standardized testing measures application of facts and concepts very satisfactorily either. At an evaluation conference in which we asked teachers to help us interpret the data we had collected, some teachers explained that it takes time to go beyond mastery of facts and concepts to application of facts and concepts, and they feel pressure to cover more material in the same course every year. When we asked teachers if they would teach differently "in the best of all possible worlds," many teachers said they would, and they named other teaching strategies they would like to use more often. We asked what prevented them from teaching as they would like to teach, and a high percentage of them named some or all of the following factors as obstacles to good teaching: lack of time (including preparation time, teaching time, and time to mark and handle papers), large classes and heavy student loads, lack of suitable materials and space, and lack of cooperation by students. Many teachers asked for help in teaching students who don't achieve and won't try. They believe that efforts to keep drop-out rates low have created student expectations that they will be able to graduate if they simply remain in school and achieve little. At the same time, teachers are being told to maintain high expectations for student achievement.

In rating the effectiveness of our district's social studies program, most groups we surveyed said we have a fair to good program. Parents, teachers, students and administrators agreed in general that our district's program accomplishes satisfactorily two of the goals rated most important: the goal of developing an understanding and appreciation of American values, institutions, and ways of life and the goal of developing an understanding of the histories, values, and institutions of other countries.

Our district shares with other school systems a problem related to evaluation; we have no standardized tests that measure what we attempt to teach in our social studies program. The state-mandated testing program measures a small part of our program—and much that is not very central to our program objectives. We have not yet identified commercial tests we find useful, and we do not have the resources to develop our own. For purposes of program evaluation, we created a questionnaire with a series of open-ended questions such as these:

1. What is democracy?
2. What are three rights of a citizen of the United States? Three responsibilities?
3. Should a person be allowed to write newspaper articles criticizing elected public officials? Why or why not?
4. Which branch of government has the major responsibility for making laws?
5. Is it important to study the histories of other countries? Why or why not?

These questions and others were asked of graduating seniors in our schools. We learned a great deal by reading the responses. We learned, for example, that slightly over half of our students could explain that essence of a democracy—that it involves government according to the will of the people who are governed. About one-fourth of the students could explain it very well, about one-third gave a minimally acceptable answer, and many of the others either focused on factors that are not essential to democracy or they named a country they thought was a democracy.

More than 90 percent of the students believe that it is important to study the history of other countries and societies, and more than 95 percent think it is important to study the history of our own country. The reasons they gave are varied, but often they expressed the idea that we can prevent mistakes in the future by studying the past. It was distressing, however, to see little evidence that students could apply what they had learned in history. We did not find that a high percentage of our students could name two ways to help prevent a war. Many of them said, "Keep a strong army" or "Negotiate arms agreements," but they couldn't name a second idea. One would think that if students were learning about the history of our country they would be able to recognize that three of our questions involved freedom of expression: students were asked whether a person should be allowed to speak or publish under each of three circumstances. Most students did not perceive that there was a common principle underlying the three questions, so they decided whether or not to support the right of free speech according to their perceptions of what danger would result if the speaker were successful in achieving his or her objective. A majority would support the right of a newspaper to print criticism of elected officials, for example, but fewer would allow a speaker to campaign on television for a member of the American Communist Party and even fewer would allow a speaker at a public meeting to speak in favor of a law to limit the number of children a family can have. In the latter case, the reason most frequently given was that in a democracy people can have as many children as they wish. Students apparently thought that no one should be allowed to recommend to others an idea they consider to be dangerous to a democratic way of life.

Other responses to questions on our questionnaire led us to believe that many students are *exposed* to history, but that they have few opportunities to try to apply what they have learned—to recognize basic principles in a variety of contexts, to find recurring themes, to write about how history can be helpful in explaining the present or thinking about the future.

All in all, people generally gave our social studies program a B-, about the same grade the textbooks received. Very few said we were failing or near failing, and very few gave the program an A. Many said that the grade given to the program depended on which teachers a given student had from kindergarten through graduation: a student who got all of the best teachers got an A program, no matter what textbooks were used or what the curriculum guides said. A student who had poor teachers experiences a poor program. Good teachers, it seems, make sense out of the poorest program, and poor teachers can ruin all the good things a school district can do to create a good program.

Though some distressing things emerged in our study, there was far more good news than bad. What is the good news?

First of all, more people than we had anticipated expressed a view of a coherent K-12 social studies program with a central core occupied by history and important roles for government, geography, economics and other social science disciplines. This view of social studies is still not as complete nor as widespread as I believe we need if we are to make the case for social studies as clearly as we need to do. But many teachers who have in the past been content simply to argue for more history or more geography and many who have seen high school history as a series of separate courses unrelated to elementary and middle school social studies are now willing to look beyond the boundaries of our own classroom walls to look for connections. And many seem willing to consider the idea that these connections may lie in social studies goals to which each grade level and each course makes a contribution.

Second, our teachers appear to be doing a fairly effective job of teaching the goals rated most important by parents, teachers and administrators.

Third, many teachers are creating successful social studies every day by the kind of instruction they plan and implement in their own classrooms—whether or not the entire social studies profession agrees on how to describe good social studies. Teachers continue to teach because they believe what they are doing makes a difference. And enough social studies teachers all over this country are doing it well enough that students very often name a social studies course as one of the most valuable courses they have taken.

Finally, we are not as far from convincing our public of the importance of social studies as some might think. We are widely considered to be one of the "Big Four" curriculum areas already. We have a clear invitation to continue to define our field and press for its importance relative to the whole curriculum. We need to do two things:

- Speak out and proudly demonstrate the examples of successful social studies we can identify.
- Spend as much of our classroom time as possible helping students see how to apply what they are learning. If each student who leaves our social studies classes believes that what has been learned has been stimulating and important—if each one knows the purpose of the learning, sees the connections among the courses, and can apply what has been learned—we will be doing the work of convincing our most important public of the importance of social studies.

As an organization, NCSS exists to facilitate that learning. We must be able to tell everyone that we know a good program when we see it and we know what makes it good. In this year of Affirmation of Social Studies, let us proudly celebrate the successes of social studies teachers and let us tell everyone how we can tell they are successful. Without the achievements of good teachers, nothing we do is important. With each of their achievements, our entire profession is enhanced.

# 1985

# EXCELLENCE: A PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Donald H. Bragaw*

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**This presidential address was presented on November 23, 1985 to the 65th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Chicago, Illinois. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 50 (March 1986): 214-218. ERIC Number: EJ 349 984.**

# 1985

## Excellence: A Professional Responsibility

*Donald H. Bragaw*

Thank you, Paul, for your kind and gracious introduction; as Lyndon Johnson once said: "My father would have enjoyed it, and my mother would have believed every word of it."

And thank you, all of you sitting in the audience or on the platform for the privilege of allowing me to be standing here tonight giving the presidential address.

Being President of the National Council for the Social Studies this year has been the highest and most rewarding professional honor of my life, capping as it does six years of Board of Directors and officer service, and 27 years of membership. That statement does not detract from nor denigrate in any way the many honors and extraordinary associational relationships that years of service as member and officer of the Long Island Council for the Social Studies, the New York State Council for the Social Studies and the council of State Social Studies Specialists brought to my life. To have been thus associated for so many years with some of the finest people I have ever known has been a privilege accorded to few. I have dedicated my professional life—and part of my personal life as well—to the social studies profession. My children as they grew older were very much aware that for many years the biggest turkey was not at home for Thanksgiving. For their forbearance and that of my wife, I am truly grateful and thankful.

I have presumptuously oriented my presentation tonight to excellence in social studies and the quest for professional leadership, for I truly believe that as social studies professionals we must, as all professional are supposed to do, take charge of our profession. Another apt title might have been "Who's in charge?" At the present time I would assert that we—social studies professionals are not in charge of social studies, or at least not taking the lead to assert our area of responsibility, or educating the public to our centrality and significance.

I'd like to explore that idea a little further, and then suggest that I think we have begun to turn the corner with hope and promise that this year marks—like the Chinese year of the dragon, horse or tiger—the year of the social studies professional. It is a subject that presumably lies within your orbit of interest, or at least not in your zone of indifference. While—if you will excuse a bit of irreverence—my address to this audience may be like the Baptist preacher's sermon to the already washed, I hope that the message will extend beyond this room to all of your colleagues back home for whom social studies professional organization membership will become an imperative—as well as a tax deduction.

## Window of Opportunity

I believe that for the first time in a long time we have been given a challenge that does not come around too often. We have a window of opportunity to develop and present some clear direction in response to our many critics both within and without the profession. The National Council for the Social Studies can no longer be, in the words of John Kenneth Galbraith, like the warrior monuments in Washington, DC, parks where the posture is heroic, the sword is held high, but alas, the movement is nil. It is time to get off the pedestal and take charge of determining what social studies can and should be. The time is now as we approach the 21st century.

Over the years I believe that social studies as a professional field has lost control over our goals and our direction! We have become a refuge for diffuse and multitudinous subjects, projects and causes. As a result, our central focus has become fuzzy. And, while great definitional debates continue unabated in academia, the classroom teacher and school districts remain uncertain of just what social studies is supposed to contribute to a child's education. In the words of one social studies educator, we have become soft at the core. Just one indicator of this situation is the presence of diverse position statements, curriculum guidelines, and the like that inhabit the publications of NCSS—each adding to, none subtracting from, the ever-enlarging objectives the organization claims to support.

## Who Is In Charge?

If we, as social studies professionals seem not to be "in charge," who does determine what it is that social studies is, or should be? The list is a long one and I can only touch upon some of the more prominent examples of who and what influences the determination of what social studies is or should be in the nation's schools.

First, there are the assimilated, conglomerated and subsidiaried profit-oriented textbook folk whose livelihood depends on look-alike products—products sometimes altered to be presented at the altar of state textbook adoption committees in the hopes of a half-million dollar sale. Few authors have escaped the editorial office cosmeticians, whose goal seems to be to provide us with tampered and tempered texts, truly bland and blah, massive, "prettied up," shallow—and, according to some, without redeeming literary value. But these same texts, according to more than one study, *are* the social studies curriculum, the core of the daily lesson.

Yet the textbook industry—not prone to self-initiated innovation and somewhat chastened by its blighted romance with the social studies projects of the sixties—is responsive to its customers whose basis for making text and materials choices rests upon intellectual goals established in 1893, modified in 1916 and tinkered with at several points between then and now. Almost 70 years of tinkering has not made those goals any clearer. The need for a serious new effort to establish our profession's goals for the 21st century is upon us.

## Path to Nirvana

The clarity of purpose has not been sharpened by the advent over the years of a variety of program emphases that have promised to infuse everything and do away with nothing, sometimes look upon themselves as wholly independent from social studies, and presume to be the eight-fold path to nirvana. Such projects also determine what social studies is. Each one of these emphases may significantly contribute to the whole, but because the big goals tend to be unclear, it is unsure as to how emphases like law related, global, consumer, occupational, entrepreneurial, career, bicentennial and the like fit into the larger picture.

The projects of the sixties, good as most of them were, represented a smorgasbord of means and ends, and led eventually to the charge that social studies was all things to all people. This, I believe, led in turn to the backlash of the 70s and 80s. The problem was not the projects, but the failure of the projects to relate to overall goals that teachers, knowledgeable administrators and even some social studies gurus could relate to or accept.

We, NCSS and the professionals it represents, have a responsibility to clear up misunderstandings and murky goals so we can more definitely delineate what the core of social studies is, and what and how that core can be implemented and supplemented, a major reason for NCSS to call for a national commission to study and make recommendations about such goals.

But there are others in charge.

The axe-grinders—the special interests—look upon the schools, and frequently the social studies, as the place where their special concerns should not only appear, but be stressed. I'm sure that everyone sitting here can name a few that have touched upon your programs. Special interests should not always be considered in the pejorative sense, for many are justified in their concerns for equity and fair treatment in a curriculum that is looked upon as covering everything from Afghanistan to Maslow's basic and higher needs to the Zimmerman note in 12 years, and 140 agriculture days per year.

One of the most recent of these special interest groups, for example, is the Vietnam Veterans who ask for a dignified place and treatment in texts and lessons about an uncertain and devastating involvement in a war that few seem to want to recognize. They want—indeed, demand this—in spite of the fact that few history classes ever get to 1945 or beyond in any topic.

Other special interest groups include religious groups, prejudice promoters, book censors, ecologists, peace folk, ethnic groups, chambers of commerce, wildlife protectors, historical societies of one type or another, economic saviors of the far right, muddled middle and extreme left, do-gooders, problem solvers, divine revelators, truth knowers, true believers and justified justice seekers. These are but a few of the numerous groups that have looked at the social studies curriculum with an acquisitive eye and sought to correct the error of our errant ways, each with their own infused solutions. Many times they find reception, or confused responses, because social studies is so flexible, and for many (even in Texas) neither essential nor grounded in clear goals.

For birch tree-like administrators and uncertain self-censoring teachers, the social studies are the perfect place to stick a special plea. In this context we should not forget the Phyllis Schlaflys of this world and their Hatch Amendment that could make of the schools a vast permission-slip bureaucracy, with classes grouped by special interests cloaked in parental "concern," not by intellectual objectives or goals that parents can clearly understand and support. Social studies programs are clearly marked for open season because have we not indeed opened up our doors to all? Are we not just a bit like *Oklahoma's* Ado Annie—we just "caint" say no? And why? Are our standards as loose as Ado Annie's? The perception of many is that they are.

And then there are the national, state, district and commercial tests that have become the shibboleth of objectivity, accountability and management. They, too, weigh heavily in determining content. With but few exceptions the measurements in social studies concentrate on student achievement in accumulating facts in computerized fashion, not in under-

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standing relationships among them. In some cases the orientation of the tests reveals more about the people who constructed them than about the test-taker. A recent example was the circulation of a draft list of 100 basic facts that should be the core of American historical/cultural literacy. This list is part of a project of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (a part of the same company that controls the fluctuating national SAT examinations, but directed through the Educational Excellence Network centered at Vanderbilt University and funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities).

While I hope that their project will eventually turn out to be worthwhile, its initial efforts were a sorry and dismaying disappointment that seemed to ignore historical events and writing of the last 30 years. One black, two women and the Smoot-Hawley tariff made the role of honor. After all these years of tears and travail, the prestigious NAEP in that early version of the 100 basic facts returned us to Dick and Jane history as it existed in 1953. In conjunction with my account of this new instrument soon to hit the streets, I am reminded of the first of the famous *New York Times* tests of American history knowledge in 1943. (Given every ten years or so, it has always proved definitely that U.S. students do not know American history.) This first test brought about an exchange between the *Times*, a critical letter writer (and test co-author), and the distinguished executive secretary of NCSS at the time, Wilbur Murra. I might point out that our new Executive Director has recently been quoted by the *New York Times* in almost the exact context that appeared in 1943: The decline of history and the rise of the soft social sciences to dominate public school programs. The more things change. . . .

### Isolated Bits of Information

All tests, regardless of the source—and if accepted uncritically, have a way of shaping curriculum. In classroom after classroom across this nation, our students are constantly confronted by tests that tend to test for rote memory of isolated bits of information. Little or no relationships, analogies, or other critical thinking skills appear on such tests. Is it because such thinking is not a major goal of our field of study? I would suggest that, given some extended experience in hundreds of classrooms, the goal of critical thinking is not accepted as a valid one, if, indeed, it is known. John Goodlad's research concerning the lack of interactive modes of instruction in social studies classrooms is reflected in non-interactive tests: facts stand alone—they have no applicability. What are the standards of information gathering, using and presenting in history, geography and civics that can be used as the basis for testing?

One look at the simplistic kind of social studies on the California and other standard tests of achievement, and you get a frustrating sense of the lack of social studies goals and purpose in the elementary grades. For years such tests have clearly pointed the way for administrators as to what is and is not important in the social studies; it is such tests that have set the standard in elementary social studies—and all of us sitting here know what that has meant to school programs K-6.

There are still widely differing requirements for social studies courses and testing across the states.

While the number of states that require more than two years of social studies has increased, the types and kinds of requirements vary, but the competency test efforts tend to be uniformly objective in nature. If the adage of what is tested is what is taught is true, then we can easily see the true picture of the nature and status of social studies. While the situation improves, much needs to be done. But the question remains, what goals will determine what the program and what the test shall be? It is interesting to note that for the very first time, the NCSS Board of Directors has approved the creation of an Advisory Committee on Tests and Evaluation to help it formulate policy and program activity testing.

Those same states that rely on greater testing for the improvement of instruction, may defeat their noble purpose by creating tests that turn the clock backwards and continue to encourage the very type of learning that presumably led education to its purported sad state. It is a triumph of management—for the test results will presumably enable us to clearly identify the non-competent children and correct their faults—without necessarily changing the trappings of the instructional system that made them deficient in the first place. Not only the "what," but the "kind of what" in social studies is a crucial matter for consideration not just in testing, but in learning as well.

The list of other influences on what social studies is today is quite long. Let me just mention others, some of which I am sure will ring bells, if not gongs, in your mind:

1. Curriculum building by legislation has become a favorite occupation in some states where education is seen as a sexy political issue. Free enterprise and competency testing are but two examples of this trend. Were it not for a courageous Arkansas judge, creationism might also have made its way into legislative educational requirements.
2. State education agencies have also responded to the national reports and to national political and education priorities; every state has gone through one kind of curriculum reform or another in

social studies and other areas. Predominant in the patterns of such reform are accountability and management systems that in their most basic form are intent upon an alchemy that changes humanists into technicians. The issue of empowerment raised by Ernest Boyer and Al Shanker directly relates to loss of control over many aspects of the teaching-learning act. In some states the excesses may soon catch up, and the axiom of Charles V of France may prove out: the reason of the state is in opposition to the state of reason.

3. To cite "the tube" as a major influence on social studies is to reiterate a McLuhan truism, but intensified. Extend that into computer programming—it is possible that more thinking skills are called for in video arcades than in schools—and the picture becomes, in my opinion, ominous. Visual literacy and civic literacy are—if you will excuse the pun—slices off the same apple and all of it without the leavening influence of social interaction. If there is any unique skill responsibility the *social* studies has, it is the social interactive function. Dittoed sheets, workbooks, computers and television have not fostered that uniqueness.
4. The very real, and deliberate, near elimination of funding for the social sciences is beginning to have an impact on the kinds of social studies research and educational projects that are being funded out of the cutback federal budgets. Many such research programs now depend on congressional veto overrides. This may well reflect a high official's disdain for the social sciences in favor of the humanities—purely defined.
5. And, oh, so many others whose goals and priorities are having a serious impact. But I would be sadly remiss if I did not repeat here that professional associations have also had effect—and in the case of NCSS the messages have not been consistent or clear. Professional associations do have a role in shaping public policy and educational programs. But we cannot be all things to all people and rest easy that we have an identifiable identity in school programs; for that is where the crucial test comes—in the schools.

The list is indeed long, and each of you must be able to add your own favorite. But enough of the negative—it is a little like what the wildcat said in the middle of making love to a skunk: "I've enjoyed as much of this as I can stand." But if, as I have asserted, these are the people and groups in charge, why is it that teachers—and social studies teachers for our purposes—are not in charge? I conclude that it may be because teachers have as a group neglected for too long our professional social studies selves, and our profession—and have not asked of our professional organization to update and sharpen our goals and to lead.

I have gone to eight state social studies council meetings this past year; the attendance at four of them was small by any comparison; at two of them the percentage was good compared to the previous year's attendance, but in all cases when one asked about the total number of possible attendees (i.e., total number of social studies professionals in a state) the percentage drops severely. In Texas, with an active and aggressive council, 1,500 members belong to the state council out of a possible 9,000 secondary social studies teachers; of that number only 781 belong to the National Council. I could give very similar statistics for New York, California, Indiana and other states where active councils are present. On the national scene, NCSS now has close to 22,000 members—a rise, incidentally in the last 18 months of 6,000—and what is the potential universe? I would estimate somewhere close to 150,000—elementary, secondary, college and others. If this is true, then we have reached only 12 percent, and of that percentage one-third attend the annual meeting.

The organization is not complaining—indeed we are delighted at increased membership—but my point comes home when you learn that there are 60,000 science teachers in their professional association and the same number of English association members from a similar potential universe as social studies; and 10,000 foreign language teacher members from a much smaller universe. Numbers count in Washington and elsewhere when you want to make a difference.

But it is not enough to say all this and quit without noting hopeful signs, and there are several. How can a professional organization like NCSS help the professionals deal with their situation and the pressures that come upon them from some, if not all, of the above? I can assert to you that NCSS has begun to focus its sights on several of these areas. Let me mention just a few of these forward-looking steps. You have seen reports of them in *The Social Studies Professional.*

NCSS has initiated over the past two years:

*A National Commission for the Social Studies*: This is an attempt to define, or redefine, the basic goals of social studies. Dr. Jerri Sutton has just agreed to direct the writing of a proposal and seek funding for this ambitious project. We will seek out advice and counsel from all who desire to give voice: professional discipline associations, independent and private groups, individuals (both members and non-members) and other segments of the wider professional and general public.

Dr. Sutton will be working out of the NCSS office. Once we have the funding—a difficult, but not impossible task—our goal will be to obtain the wisest, widest and most representative distinguished group of individuals to serve as commissioners, hire a commission staff director, and proceed to as thorough-going an investigation and analysis as we can obtain. Importantly, the Board of Directors has agreed that the commission's findings will not be subject to their approval. NCSS will issue the report and act upon it.

*Scope and Sequence*: The National Council will continue to search out different designs for scope and sequence that will enlighten the field as to some of the potentials that exist for organizing the overwhelming bodies of information and knowledge that history, the humanities and the social sciences provide. The responsibility is to bring order out of chaos and sensibly deal with what we know about learning and thinking in relation to that vast sea of rapidly accumulating information that besets all curriculum developers. NCSS has begun a process that will rationally search for and disseminate a variety of scopes and sequences from which district social studies professionals might more easily select appropriate designs—any one of which would accomplish the major goals (such as those established by the National Commission).

*Programs of Excellence*: For some time now, NCSS has honored individual teachers for outstanding service and contributions to the field; in the past two years, individual teachers have been cited for outstanding instructional abilities and these efforts have, I believe, been worthy recognitions. But more needs to be done to counter the negative criticisms of social studies. The NCSS Board of Directors authorized this past year a search and recognition of excellent programs in social studies in each state and locale in the country. Much exists that should be singled out for praise—and replication where possible. Be it a K-3, K-6, 7-8, or 9-12 or college teacher preparation program—defined as an organized series of courses or experiences upon the completion of which a student could conceivably be considered social studies educated—such programs can be identified, and from them clear intellectually solid standards of program development and implementation can be developed. NCSS can offer such standards as guidance to the field, providing leadership in clarifying our goals and our performance.

*Textbook Taskforce*: Many studies have been done of textbooks—not all of them critical, for texts have improved over the years—but all of them have assumed that the base upon which text decisions have been made are valid. When one considers that some world history texts have now reached 900 plus pages, and that secondary American history texts are increasingly offered in two volumes, there is a real need to examine just what a textbook can do—and should do—in relation to social studies learning. The textbook taskforce needs to look at those potentials as well as to focus on the needs for the 21st century as best as can be determined.

*Inservice Programs*: In the wake of the numerous national reports, one clear and resounding message is clear: teachers have been seriously neglected in the updating of their professional skills and intellectual base. School districts, and teachers themselves, have a responsibility for helping to improve this situation. NCSS has begun to examine their responsibilities in this area and initial steps are being taken to provide for institutes and workshops that would help teachers and districts to meet the new demands. It is hoped that this coming year will provide greater direction in this area.

*Restructuring of NCSS*: Over the past two years, the Board of Directors of NCSS has taken a long and hard look at itself and the structure and operation of the Council. While the basic design of the council is strong, there were some areas that needed to be reevaluated. The role of the Board of Directors, for example, tended to be focused on the details of Council operation—which in any well-organized association is carried on by the staff—and not on policy matters, which is its true, constitutional function. This latter orientation has now been established.

The Council has also taken steps to bring the operational year, the budget year and the officer year into line with each other. Prior to next year, the officers (whose terms ran from January 1 to December 31) were forced to operate out of two budget years (July 1 to June 30), while many of the council's programs ran along school year time lines. A constitutional amendment passed by the House of Delegates has eliminated that confusion: it is hoped that the amendment will be approved by the total membership on the ballot this coming election. Other steps taken to improve Council responsiveness to membership needs is to reexamine the role and function of committees and SIG groups within the structure of the entire Council. That also will be followed through in the coming year. The Council has become very conscious of its need to organize better to serve its members.

In all these ways and more, the National Council is seeking to deserve your membership and your professional dedication by addressing some of the most significant needs of our professional lives. We must take charge of our profession—not in any dictatorial fashion—but by assuming and asserting leadership. Professional association *can* empower us. We can make it the year of the professional by encouraging others to join us in improving ourselves, our social studies programs and our organizational strength. Together we can make a difference. By associating and professionalizing our efforts we can make an impact.

It is a little like the Kentucky farmer who entered his mule in the Kentucky Derby. An incredulous neighbor asked him: "What for?" and the farmer replied: "I know he can't win, but I thought the association would do him some good." Professional association can do us all some good. Together we can make a difference.

Like the mule, I am proud—very proud—to be associated with you. Thank you.

# 1986

## HOW DO YOU KEEP THE CHILDREN MORAL AFTER SCHOOL?

*Paul R. Shires*

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**This presidential address was presented on November 21, 1986 to the 66th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at St. Louis, Missouri. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 51 (March 1987): 214-216, 218-219. ERIC Number: EJ 368 189.**

# 1986

## How Do You Keep the Children Moral After School?

*Paul R. Shires*

### What is the old American folklore about developing moral children?

First, American folklore says: "Parents, the church, and the school should inculcate values."

Second, folklore says: "Use strict discipline to develop good habits."

Third: "Keep the kids busy. My friends, we've got Trouble! Right here in River City! And it starts with 'T' and that rhymes with 'P' and that stands for Pool! But River City's gonna have a boys' band and I mean we'll do it today! And we'll keep the kids off the streets with Basketball! And a Rec Center! And a swimming pool! And homework!"

There is a fourth bit of folklore that is a countervailing thrust: the notion of rugged individualism, encouraging people to be nonconformist. When I was in the Soviet Union, one of our guides finally became exasperated with us and said, "You Americans are never doing what you're supposed to!" Some parts of our traditional American folklore have probably worked at cross purposes with others.

### What can we learn about moral education from a comparison with cultures of other countries?

I began to think about writing this speech on Moral Education after visiting Japan this summer with the JISEA fellows. I observed how polite and enthusiastic the pupils were, how well behaved, how they sang the elementary school song with gusto after only one year in a new school, and how the society seemed to have a minimum of social problems. Are they doing something right?

In its elementary and junior high schools, Japan has a moral education curriculum that lists many virtues, all of which we would find easy to accept. I don't know how much impact the curriculum has on students' values. It appears from Japanese behavior that getting along with others is given a very high priority. Graciousness has become a universal trait.

The Japanese have strong family units. Some of the values about women and home life might appear old-fashioned and perhaps a little sexist to some Americans, but children are well cared for. The Japanese have a strong sense of national unity and homogeneity. Prime Minister Nakasone's recent well-published remark gave Americans the impression of ethnocentrism, perhaps even a little racism, but the monocultural milieu does represent a strong national identity. One of their Moral Education goals is to strive for a society in which there is no discrimination or prejudice. Cultural conformity has its disadvantages but it has stifled neither political dissent nor technological creativity in Japan!

Thirteen years ago, I went to India where I also visited schools. Moral values in India are believed to be intertwined with Hindu spiritual values. However, research has shown that values held by children in Christian missionary schools of India and in the local vernacular schools were almost identical. Methods of teaching in India include the inculcation of virtues, the use of stories with morals, and the use of heroes as role models. I remember children putting on a skit representing Nehru, Gandhi, and Tagore. One school had a rule that teachers and students were to stay out of politics. And especially, teachers were warned to keep their hands off using students for political ends!

Eleven years ago, I visited the schools in the Soviet Union. Almost all of the virtues listed as Soviet educational objectives are the same as we would have and are undoubtedly derived from the same ethical sources. They include truthfulness, honesty, kindness, selflessness, industriousness, responsibility, and so forth. However, the Soviets do emphasize collectivism and self-criticism more than we would. Young two-year-olds in Soviet nursery schools are taught to share, "Mine is ours and ours is mine," and three-year-olds are taught to share in work tasks like setting tables. Rules are clearly explained on the first day of kindergarten, and kids are well behaved, not given to yelling, fighting or breaking things. Right away the stress is on collectivism, "Which row can behave best and win the pennant?" That provides very strong motivation for these kids and it's called "Socialist Competition." The rows are soon replaced by Octobrist cells, and a few years later by the Pioneers.

Soviet teachers expect children to come up with pat answers and the children tend to be more overtly comformist and less spontaneous than

American children are. For instance, when we saw some seven-year-old children making paper snowmen, they all copied the teacher's example as exactly as they could. However, when a couple of older children tossed paper airplanes, their teacher was mortified, until we explained to her that American children sometimes tossed paper airplanes too.

Even in the Soviet Union nonconformity and dissent sometime occur! You know, for example, that there are excellent Soviet underground writers. As well as noticeable public drunkenness and a high divorce rate. And whereas adults politely queue up in food lines, they push and shove to get their coats after a ballet performance! Good habits don't always transfer. Now, let's look again at Soviet schools.

Beginning at grade four, the Soviet teacher is assisted by an Upbringer who is in charge of physical and moral upbringing, peer group leaders, excursions, camping trips, and advises the Octobrists and Pioneers. There is much use of peer-group pressure to produce good behavior. (Of course, we Americans take advantage of peer influence, too. Like the mother who said to her young son, "Why don't you play with the good boys in the neighborhood, not the bad ones." And the young son replied, "Their mothers won't let me!") The Soviet Upbringer can shame pupils into behaving better at home, and shame parents, or bring pressure on them at their jobs to treat their children better, whereas Americans tend to think parents should be able to do anything they want with their children except injure them physically. With more deterioration of the American family, this might change.

Ten years ago, I visited Poland. I have less to say about Polish schools, but I saw the incredible influence of the Catholic church in an officially atheist country where many who are Communist Party members also attend church. I found the Poles very friendly and generous, but they have a few social problems. Despite the teaching of morality by both church and state in Poland, drunkenness and broken families are commonplace. Poles admitted to a 40 percent divorce rate and believed the Soviet rate would be similar, although the Soviets only admitted to a 25 percent divorce rate. I noticed that in both Poland and Japan, there was a considerable interdependence upon friends that one grew up with for favors—as there is reputed to be in England (which sounds a bit like Kohlberg's stage 3).

Now let's look at a few generational differences in the United States. One hundred years ago, Moral Education was represented by the moralistic McGuffey Readers and the maxim not to "Spare the Rod." Fifty years ago, Progressive Education modified ideas of discipline as well as Moral Education. The public today tends to worry about social problems and to look to the schools to solve them, which is oversimplistic, of course. The

Education Commission of the States recently concluded that about 15 percent of our youth may never be productive because they are already dropouts from drug abuse, delinquency, pregnancy, school failure, and so forth, and the percentage is rapidly growing. These are issues that social studies classes can get excited about and can discuss constructively as social issues but will not solve as personal counseling problems.

### What are the modern philosophical varieties of approaches to moral education?

They tend to fall into positions on a spectrum of external influence or control. Maturationism is a theory representing little or no societal influence. Rousseau believed that people were innately good and would become moral adults if allowed to develop naturally without society's interference. More recently, Rogers and Maslow have proposed giving people space to find themselves. On the other hand, the few recorded examples of wild children in the literature seem not to support an extreme laissez-faire view. Nor do the examples of the more neglected children in our society.

Behaviorism is a theory at the end of the spectrum representing total societal influence or control. B. F. Skinner has said the reality is that people's nature is determined by their conditioning, so the experts should ascertain that individuals be conditioned to accept the moral norms of society. One of the problems of this approach is that Skinner rejects society's moral norms of autonomy and freedom. On the other hand, the procedure seems relatively successful with behavior-disordered children.

Psychoanalytic theories can help explain strong individual emotions. Superego psychoanalysts have defined conscience as the introjection of parents' values. Ego psychologists have related ego to emotions. However, teachers are not licensed psychiatrists and should not probe the subconscious.

Developmental psychology assumes that natural development of moral ideas may be accelerated. Piaget described invariant developmental stages through which a person grows. Kohlberg's definition of moral growth is the acquisition of universalizable principles to which a person grows as he or she become more mature. Universalizable principles are principles that one would want to see applied to everyone.

Kohlberg identified those principles as justice and human rights, or, most basically, justice. Kohlberg applied the stage theory to cognitive moral development after finding consistency for development through those stages over many years in six cultures. In case you don't know or remember, the six stages that Kohlberg identified as universal (after the zero or premoral stage) are:

1. response to reward and punishment,
2. reciprocity or you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours,
3. good boy/nice girl, or trying to please someone,
4. upholding law and order,
5. participation in a social contract,
6. a principled view, upholding just principles for their own sake.

### What is cognitive moral development and how can it be facilitated?

Kohlberg's research has shown that cognitive moral development may be accelerated if the children are engaged in a discussion or debate about what ought to be done in a particular situation when a couple of values seem to be in conflict. The rationales for positions debated reflect stage differences and each child is challenged by arguments based upon the next higher stage (which the teacher needs to provide for the highest stage student). In contrast to real life situations, Kohlberg's classical dilemmas keep situations simple enough that students cannot easily escape the horns of the dilemma.

There are prerequisite skills. There is a great deal of research that supports the efficacy of Kohlberg's theory, except that the evidence is somewhat mixed below the 4th grade. It appears that some prerequisite intellectual skills are often missing, such as conceptualization, prioritization, empathy, and communication. Kohlberg and Piaget both indicated that conceptualization (what is lying, stealing, hurting, etc.) must come before formal operations.

Prioritization skills are also a prerequisite. In 1964, when Kelly, Pringle, and Edwards asked young children what was the worst crime they could imagine, the first answer was killing. The second worst crime they could imagine was running in the halls. The children had not developed a very sophisticated sense of priorities. In another case, a child was told that the family would have to send the family dog out to the farm because the brother had asthma. The young child responded, "Why can't we send the brother out to the farm; it isn't the dog's fault, is it?" This child had not developed a very appropriate set of priorities, and some sophistication of priorities as well as some mastery of concepts is necessary to deal with moral dilemmas.

Very young children haven't developed empathy to help them take intentions into account in determining what was the worse act. They presume whoever did the most damage must represent the worst act, regardless of intention. There is an excellent book entitled *That's Not Fair!* by Larry Jensen, published by Brigham Young University in 1973 and still in paperback, that contains very good ideas on how to help kids develop more understanding of some of these factors. (For example, did Susie get burned because she disobeyed her mother after her mother told her not to touch the hot iron? What if her mother had not told her; would she have gotten burned?) These questions identify prerequisite thinking skills that children need in order to handle moral dilemmas.

Also, children need to learn to focus on the act rather than upon the actor. Blackburn indicated that children tend to label people as good or bad irrespective of the situation, so it is important to help a child learn to focus on the act or behavior in the situation. I have for you a poor example of a poem for children. First, it's poor because it focuses upon the person as evil; second, because it represents no higher than stage 2 moral thinking but uses 5th grade vocabulary. The poem was originally written in 1900 and was reprinted more recently in a book entitled *What I Cannot Tell My Mother Is Not Fit for Me to Know*. I'll read four of the nine stanzas. It is entitled "Wicked Willie."

> Willie was a wicked boy, snubbed his poor old mother;
> Willie was a dreadful boy, quarreled with his brother;
> Willie was a spiteful boy, often pinched his sister;
> Once he gave her such a blow, raised a great big blister!
> Willie was a sulky boy, sadly plagued his cousins;
> Often broke folks' window panes, throwing stones by dozens;
> Often worried little girls, bullied smaller boys;
> Often broke their biggest dolls, jumped upon their toys. . . .
> If a pony would not trot, angry Willie thrashed it.
> If he saw a clinging snail, thoughtless Willie smashed it;
> If he found a sparrow's nest, unkind Willie hid it,
> All the mischief ever done, folks knew Willie did it. . . .
> They all left him to himself, and he was so lonely,
> But of course it was his fault, Willie's own fault only.
> If a boy's a wicked boy, shy of him folks fight then;
> If it makes him dull and sad, why, it serves him right, then!

(Even adults sometimes have trouble with attacking people rather than the moral issues. For example, when the arms negotiations broke down in Reykjavik, Donald Regan said, "Well, this shows the Russians for what they really are!") Well, the problems aren't solved by pointing fingers at people.

Various factors can help children understand a higher stage. I have a somewhat better example of literature from the same book that might be appropriate for children at the reciprocity stage, stage 2, because it seems mostly to represent the rationale of good boy/nice girl, stage 3, and could help accelerate stage progress. It was originally written in 1861.

I must not tease my mother for she is very kind
And everything she tells me I must directly mind,
For when I was a baby, and could not speak or walk,
She lull'd me in her bosom, and taught me how to talk.
I must not tease my mother, and when she likes to read,
Or when she has the headache, I'll silent be indeed.
In play I'll not be noisy, or trifling troubles tell,
But sitting down beside her, I'll try to make her well. . . .
How much I'll strive to please her, she every hour shall see,
For should I lose my mother, what would become of me?

Some social environments stimulate dissonance and higher level thinking. Young city children in Israel show on tests a tendency to be hedonistic, which suggests stage 2, whereas kibbutz children are more inclined to be concerned with others' feelings, suggesting stage 3. Moslem and Jewish women in Israel are generally found at stage 3, but women on the kibbutzim are found mostly at stage 4. The relationships on the kibbutz seem favorable to moral development.

Parent interaction also helps. Haan reported that, while adolescent stage 3 and 4 subjects' relations with their parents tended to be conflict-free, stage 5 and 6 subjects' relations with their parents tended to be conflict-inducing. So, parents who do not argue with their children may be stunting their moral growth.

Can kids learn to be just in an unjust school? Kohlberg and others produced evidence indicating that their so-called "Just Schools" facilitated growth of one-third stage on average. In those schools, students had some responsibility for the governance of their part of the school all day long for seven weeks, although a few students began to assume most of the responsibility.

Some researchers, including James Rest, have provided evidence that modeling by the teacher is a very significant factor, which common sense would seem to support. What effect does a coach have who preaches sportsmanship but practices win at any cost? What effect does a clergyman have who preaches righteousness but practices adultery? On the other hand, what effect does Mother Teresa have who lives by her beliefs? Or what effect has Christa McAuliffe had, who said she wanted students to be inspired by space exploration and by their own imaginations?

Peter McPhail of England has listed students' criticisms of some of their poor teachers: The students said some teachers use petty sarcasm, personal verbal attacks, don't listen but just find fault, make caustic remarks over trivia, they are remote, depressed, rude, sometimes tell lies, spy on the students, they never believe the students. If teachers don't provide good value models, will they come from television? Teachers of various views should be hired to provide different kinds of models of involvement that students may admire, but teachers should not do the moral thinking for the students. McPhail's British Lifeline Series includes real-life dilemmas from the last half century.

### What are the affective arguments about moral education?

Stage 3 is often misunderstood. Trying to please is not really caring. A few female critics (notably Gilligan and Noddings) have found fault with Kohlberg for seeming to put down the caring characteristic as a stage 3 phenomenon, claiming that the fact that women are more often found at that stage and that men are more often found at stage 4, the law and order stage, reflects a sex bias. This is a misunderstanding of stage 3, which represents trying to please rather than caring. If I should read you part of an article by Jacquelyn Mitchard from the *Milwaukee Journal* of October 12, you will better understand the point.

"A friend and I get together to talk about the friend we have in common.

'I heard from Diana,' he says, and rolls his eyes.

'Still at it?' I ask.

'Still,' he says mournfully.

'You should tell her.'

'No, you should tell her.' But nobody is going to tell her. We've been at this minuet for two years, and Diana has no idea of what it is we ought to tell her, though it is something she needs—perhaps desperately—to know.

What we ought to tell Diana is that she will never make it as a photographer, not because she cannot take a picture, but because she cannot work in any of the environments where people find photographers. That is, she can do what she loves, but cannot make a living at it.

She can make a living. She makes a good one, as a computer specialist for a health conglomerate. She hates it. She spends a hazardous amount of her work putting her portfolios in shape and making calls to people who do not return her calls. She once had such a job and lost it because she didn't cope well with the lack of direction. By the time she took her computer job, she'd nearly lost her marriage, too. So why can't Diana adjust?

Because she has a problem besides her obsession: her friends. The details of this story are changed because we don't want her to know we are talking about her or she'll hate us. She'll hate us because for the past two years when Diana has told us how determined she is to return to photography as a career, we've all made mushing noises, and assured her the next submission could be the ticket.

Why do we do this? A dozen times, we've determined to tell her to shape up, face the future and stop beating her head against the wall.

A dozen times, we've backed off. . . .

Psychologists call this behavior enabling. In its most extreme form, it's what allows the family alcoholic to put everyone else through hoops. . . .

My friends and I are doing Diana no favor. We're letting her harden her perceived persecution into a wall she'll never chip away.

Is this wrong? Yep. We owe Diana honesty.

How much honesty?

Do we want to be the kind of people who know all about telling the truth but nothing whatsoever about being true?

There's a sane way to serve up this medicine. And I'm going to find it. And as soon as I do, I'm going to tell Diana's other friend to call her right away."

Enabling is not really caring. This story is an example of being true to a friend in the stage 3 sense, but not caring for her the way a loving friend really ought to do! It's a classic stage 3 example of good boy/nice girl. Real caring can be tough love.

However, the full meaning of "Good" does need an affective component. Cognitive moral development is not enough to precipitate action. The love of or caring for humankind is the affective side of justice, and is missing from Kohlberg's cognitive development process. Noddings said that moral growth is stunted without the capacity for love. It would be a logical absurdity to say of someone that he is an educated man but that he loves nothing. In September, Irving Kristol of the American Enterprise Institute said schools cannot convince students it's foolish to take drugs; they know that. They just don't care. Well, I contend that schools can care about students and help them to care about themselves and others. It is equally true that the affective component by itself does not precipitate intelligent action. Caring is not sufficient without knowledge to deal with complex issues, like nuclear energy, the development of tropical rain forests, use of life-sustaining machinery, and so forth.

Concepts of "the good" abound in literature. It has been observed that, when the battle between reason and feeling is fought in philosophical discourse, reason usually wins, but when the battle between reason and feeling is fought in the pages of literature, feeling usually wins. The best example I can think of is O. Henry's "Gift of the Magi," in which husband and wife each secretly sacrificed the possession they prized most to buy a present for the other. The husband pawned his watch to buy a clasp for his wife's hair and the wife sold her hair to buy a watch for her husband. Love won over reason as O. Henry thought it should.

Many stories have morals. Over and over as children we heard many stories with morals and developed concepts of values in our minds. Stories like: "Cinderella" (indicating that kindness succeeds), "The Three Little Pigs" and "The Little Engine That Could" (showing that hard work pays), "The Little Dutch Boy" (showing you should do your duty), "The Pokey Little Puppy" (saying don't be late or you'll miss your supper), "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" (saying don't be dishonest or people won't believe you anymore), and so on. Stories with morals are older than history and probably will continue to excite the human spirit for a long time to come. Aesop, Uncle Remus, Shakespeare, O. Henry, Orwell; you can nominate others. Susan Resnick Parr of Ithaca College, New York, has been dismayed at the moral naiveté of college freshmen and she's published a book entitled *The Moral of the Story* to show how college students can get interested in moral dilemmas in literature.

Some proverbs come from written literature and some from oral traditions. Probably they are oft-repeated because they seem to express an essence of wisdom; some may even have some emotional impact, but repetition is what keeps them in memory. Some that come to mind are: If at first you don't succeed, Don't put off till tomorrow, Time and tide wait for no man, What a tangled web we weave, All work and no play, Idle hands are the devil's workshop. Now if you didn't notice that the last two proverbs contradicted each other, I suspect that we like to say proverbs more than we like to think about them.

The "bag of virtues" is dead—and probably always was.

A Boy Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. I cannot recall that that sentence ever affected my behavior. In 1928-1930, Hartshorne and May's research destroyed the notion that the bag of virtues approach was effective, although recent studies of their data have arrived at slightly different conclusions. Memorizing a bag of virtues does not improve conceptualization or have an emotional impact.

### How much autonomy is desirable?

Some autonomy is desirable, but not so much that creative conflict disappears. If rational decision making involves sharing ideas, there must be some autonomy of thought to come up with different ideas, but not so much autonomy that cooperation is precluded. We all have social needs. Even in Marxism, autonomy is seen as a long-range objective in theory, but strong collectivism reigns.

Aristotle said, "He who lives outside the polis is either a beast or a God. A beast because he is beyond the laws, or a God because he is self-sufficient, but in neither case can such a person be a human being." In Greece, the word 'idiot' meant one who did not participate in the life of the polis. Emotional development in particular is not an individual pursuit; the caring of others contributes to one's self-respect.

Human beings must have their roots in something, namely, membership in society extending through time. That's the pro-social nature of humanity. Robert Wicks has said, "Just as an amnesiac doesn't know who he is or where he is going, so a society that doesn't know its history can neither understand its present nor move coherently into the future." The same is true of an individual who doesn't know his or her roots. Heroes are models that may inspire us. They may be Vanderbilt and Rockefeller, Nathan Hale and Patrick Henry, or John Kennedy and Martin Luther King. Some of them have inspired people by deeds and some by words. Some of the words do indeed inspire people to care more about humanity. Listen while I read a few lines from Martin Luther King:

> I say to you, my friends, Let Freedom ring!
> From the hilltops of New Hampshire, from the mighty mountains of New York . . . from every hill and molehill in Mississippi. Let freedom ring from every house and hamlet, from every street in every city. When freedom rings we shall be able to speed that day, when all God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro Spiritual, Free at last! Great God Almighty, we are free at last!
> We've got some difficult days ahead.

OK, you're familiar with the rest of it and you probably remember how it has sent tingles up your spine. Heroes play a useful role as models and inspirations. Models should not be one-dimensional people, and students should learn to see through charisma as well as through beauty that is only skin deep, but there is plenty of depth in good models. The models may be found in history, in literature, in many kinds of teachers and counselors, and in other community leaders.

### What are the effects of the environment?

Some factors enhance the ultimate choice in the real world. Competencies in cognitive moral dilemmas and the prerequisite skills enlighten a moral behavior choice. The Milgram experiments seem devastating regarding people's inclination to hurt people when so instructed, but higher cognitive stages were at least less apt to do so. Motivation variables are important and need more research. The affective caring factor is a very important factor of motivating.

Some factors inhibit the better moral choices. Examples are stress and distraction. Socrates is supposed to have said, "No man knowing the good could do evil." I'm afraid Socrates was wrong! Most of us think we know the good but don't always do it.

Linn found that highly moral thinkers found themselves acting at less than their moral ideal under stressful conditions. A Phi Delta Kappa survey of its members in 1975 reported that 88 percent considered themselves to rank in the top two Kohlberg categories in moral reasoning but only 73 percent considered themselves to rank in the top two categories in moral behavior. James Leming said that students respond at higher levels on Kohlberg's classical dilemmas than on situation-specific dilemmas to which they could more easily relate, and where they could recognize that their real choice could often be at a lower stage than was ideal in their minds. Casual observation indicates that distractions and stress affect the likelihood that high school students will procrastinate and cheat. Self-fulfilling prophecies may occur. When others have low expectations of a person, that person's self-image and goals tend to be low.

The school environment may be designed to have various effects. Some school rules, like the bells, provide a minimal structure for group activities. As a classroom teacher, I know how important structure can be, but it should not be so rigid that it stultifies. Some rules are intended to encourage good habits, providing moral support. For example, some schools allow only healthful food in their vending machines.

Other school rules are behaviorist devices designed to coerce development of good habits. This quarter in my own school, the 1,200 students with no unexcused absences and no detentions received free ice-cream cones. At the semester, they will receive one exam exemption apiece and they are excited about that.

One of my neighboring school districts has authorized its administration to use dogs to sniff out drugs in students' lockers and to expel students from school whose behavior is bizarre and who won't take a pledge to stop drug use. This might be declared illegal. On the other hand, it might be considered justified as using behaviorism for the behavior-disordered. Some school rules go too far. Too much authoritarian punishment is likely to produce children with excessive guilt and/or rebelliousness. A correlation between vandalism and strong authoritarianism has been found. John Dewey said the school is pathological when stress is laid upon correcting wrongdoing instead of upon forming habits of positive service. But good habits are not enough, as the Soviet experience should indicate.

## What is the desirable environment?

In particular, what is the proper role of authority figures? Children should not be taught to hate other people's opinions! Indoctrination occurs when the aim and result is to close the mind to future reasoning.

Sometimes a little power assertion is necessary, but mostly with the very young. When children are very young and cannot understand reasons, power assertion is occasionally necessary for the children's safety and for their respect of authority. As soon as possible, the parents and nursery school teachers should introduce stage 2 reciprocity, you be nice to him and he'll be nice to you. Whenever a child says, "That's not fair!," the child is ready to think about reasons and may be ready to listen to reasons one stage above the one the child is presently using.

Induction is effective with older children, that is, helping them see the impact of actions upon others. Homer and Edwards indicated that, whereas control may be an important facilitator of moral character in young children, strict controlling and power assertion were negatively related to socialization and empathy with adolescents. And the caring component is always important, from the beginning stages of bonding and attachment to the most mature emotions. Burns and Carron, college counselors, have been concerned that the maturationist approach has caused them to refrain from encountering college students until their behavior warrants court trials or expulsion from college, and they have suggested that an earlier caring confrontation would allow them to be more helpful.

Besides Kohlberg's dilemmas, consider using public issues materials. For example, people like Hunt and Metcalf, Oliver, Newmann and Shaver have long urged greater use of controversial issues in the schools. The National Council for the Social Studies is now encouraging the use of its Public Issues Program in the schools. I'd recommend the NCSS materials to help liven up your 12th grade Government, Economics, and other social studies courses. Rationales for these materials include their relevancy to people today, their usefulness for adults as well as adolescents, and their demonstration by example of the values of human dignity, freedom of choice and rational consent in a democracy.

We will raise interest levels in politics and have better voter turnout if we can relate love and justice to political issues.

Oliver and Bane said, "Perhaps public issues debates would be less boring if there were more concern for love, work, violence, and thinking metaphorically." Before the time of Kohlberg, Nowak and Jacob reported that only in powerful emotionally laden environments had research uncovered significant reorientations of values.

The "real world" can be revealing and exciting. Ernest Boyer recommended that service to the community be a part of the secondary school experience. My own experience in helping students with off-campus projects supports the view that students' views and feelings for the elderly, the handicapped and the retarded are drastically affected by firsthand experience. Nothing students can read can begin to have a similar impact.

The teacher can be a catalyst. Like the rainmaker who seeds the clouds with silver iodide crystals in hopes of precipitating rain, we as teachers can seed the classroom atmosphere with ideas and feelings in hopes of precipitating the moral education of students. We can be catalysts, not the makers of destinies.

### What are some of the views of the Religious Right?

Values Clarification is opposed. One argument from the Religious Right is that Values Clarification procedures seem to sanction moral relativism, that is, that all values are equal, which makes them valueless or even harmful in effect by giving the impression that any choice is as good as any other—like racism is as good as tolerance. I agree with the criticism. Besides, Leming's research of the research on Values Clarification suggests that students' valuing ability is not helped by Value Clarification procedures. So why bother?

The Teaching Materials that some members of the Religious Right advocate tend to cover a narrow range of views, implying that a student should be provided only with the sectarian materials that the student already believes. That is not education. As Ken Ernst said, "When you meet a person who is opinionated, not open to others and dogmatic, then you know someone who was crippled ethically when young." Secondary students should have available a diversity of materials on controversial issues if they are to learn to think critically. Whenever the courts rule otherwise, the children are the losers.

Sometimes we hear irrational arguments from some of the Religious Right. For example, I have read the following assertions: that, since the Secular Humanist Manifestos of the 1930s are anti-God and anti-religious, and since value clarification is valueless, it is secular humanist and anti-religious. Being valueless and anti-religious is a contradiction in terms. Sometimes we hear false dichotomies and sometimes guilt by association, devices that are not worthy of these authors, nor of any other kind of authors. Teachers need to be competent logicians in order to develop teaching rationales that will stand up under criticism—and one contention should be that truth can stand the light of scrutiny.

Any teaching implies some values, so some kind of Moral Education is unavoidable. A year and a half ago, Dr. William Bennett made an interesting observation to the *London Times Educational Supplement,* which reminded me that he is inclined to use hyperbole to grab attention. He said, "Teaching is more than skills facilitating. It is the architecture of the human soul."

That is much more than I would claim for education. I would say that God has exclusive jurisdiction over the human soul, but the schools and all other institutions of society are permeated with moral decisions and responsibilities, which should be exercised in a most responsible way. For the school, being responsible means helping the individual become a responsible decision maker who knows enough and cares enough about society to work well with others in making those decisions, even under stress.

## Summary

Students need help with cognitive moral growth à la Kohlberg, with discussion skills as in the Public Issues Program, and with prerequisite cognitive skills à la Jensen.

Students need help with affective moral growth via caring teachers who are also good role models.

Students need to understand and feel their roots and inspiration in society.

Students need to realize the effects of stress and distraction on their choices.

In 1951 the NEA and the American Association of School Administrators established a commission that published a booklet entitled *Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools.* It did not produce a very memorable document. However, I hope the National Commission for the Social Studies which is being created this year will be far more productive and that it will give helpful attention to moral education.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch: We'll keep the kids busy with a boys' band, and basketball, and a Rec center, and a swimming pool, and homework! Do we really have time for this moral education stuff? By the time we're finished teaching about unicameral government and Gresham's Law, and the Federal Reserve System, the year will be over! Right? Of course, right! These kids will pick up some moral education somewhere in the long run, won't they? Well, as Lord Keynes once said, "In the long run we are all dead."

I hope that I have left you with some silver iodide crystals in your pockets, and that you will use them to seed the classroom atmosphere for good moral education, not because you are social studies teachers, but because you are intelligent, informed, humane, caring, and sensitive teachers. I know you will seed the atmosphere with something that has moral implications; so let your seeding be consciously constructive! Thank you.

# 1987

## SOCIAL STUDIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

*Jan L. Tucker*

**Jan L. Tucker was a professor of education at Florida International University, Miami.**

**This presidential address was presented on November 15, 1987 to the 67th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Dallas, Texas. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 52 (March 1988): 209-214. ERIC Number: EJ 368 189.**

# 1987

## Social Studies for the 21st Century

*Jan L. Tucker*

The year 1787 was one of those memorable turning points in history. Delegates to the Constitutional Convention had choices. They could choose to make do with a new version of the weak and ineffectual Articles of Confederation; or they might choose to go back in time and establish our own version of an English monarchy, with George Washington as our first king; or they could choose the future and establish a new form of government, one that Lincoln later described as "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." To the good fortune of succeeding generations, the founders chose to look to the future. They had a *choice*, and they chose the *future*.

This year, 1987, offers to us—the social studies profession—a similar opportunity to choose. Now almost five years into the so-called great debate on education reform, the nation's attention has finally focused on the social studies. By analogy and metaphor, we are witness to a "Constitutional Convention on the Social Studies"—the beginning of a national debate on "Social Studies for the 21st Century."

A vocal wing in this national debate about the future of the social studies looks back with nostalgia to a concept of the curriculum initially recommended in 1893 by the Committee of Ten. This 1893 curriculum concept, born again in 1987 as "cultural literacy," is being urged upon us by a rash of reports popularized by a national media blitz.

Your NCSS leadership welcomes this debate that places social studies high on the national agenda, but we believe there is no quick fix. There is no magic solution, and this is surely not the time for slogans. The field of social studies needs the best thinking and undivided attention of those who care deeply about the future of this society. In this spirit, your NCSS Board of Directors is urging the profession to look to the future.

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Students who entered kindergarten this fall will graduate from high school in the 21st century. This occasion provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the type of social studies education needed to prepare the next generation of students to become "humane, rational, participating citizens in an increasingly complex and interdependent world"—the purpose of the social studies stated in the first sentence of the first paragraph of the "Revision of The NCSS Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines," issued in 1979.[1]

## NCSS Moves Forward

Your NCSS Board of Directors has seized the initiative by establishing "Social Studies for the 21st Century" as our 1987 leadership theme for the council. We wish to be very clear. This is social studies for the 21st century, not social studies in the 21st century. We need to start now—in 1987—at the time when our 21st-century kindergarten students begin their formal education. Your board has already set several wheels in motion toward the next century.

One wheel is the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, initiated and authorized by the board in 1985. The commission's very first meeting occurred right here in Dallas several days ago. NCSS gave wings to the idea, but the commission is now flying on its own—a collaborative effort among the many parties deeply concerned about the social education of our successor generation.

It is the board's hope that commission members will pay close attention to the initial and paramount question posed by NCSS: "What should be the role of social studies in educating our students for the 21st century?" Will commission members choose the future as the members of the Constitutional Convention did? Or, will they look back, using slogans like "cultural literacy"? Social studies professionals have much at stake in the outcome of the National Commission. Your close attention to its deliberations is needed and your participation is earnestly invited.

The 1987 Annual Meeting in Dallas, with its theme of "Social Studies: Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century," is another wheel. The major speakers and the Vital Issues sessions were selected carefully to reflect important concerns and a variety of viewpoints as we prepare today for the challenges of tomorrow. Your program planners made a special effort to secure speakers who represent Third World and ethnic minority perspectives. In a recent survey of our own membership, more than 95 percent of the NCSS respondents classified themselves as "white."[2] In social studies, we must redouble our efforts to remove our blinders of habit, custom, and tradition. The world of the 21st century awaits and requires it.

One of the highlights of our Dallas meeting is the presentation of the first Christa McAuliffe Memorial Award to a social studies teacher who has "reached for the stars" as Christa did. In Dallas we are "touching the future," as Christa challenged us to do through her life and her tragic death.

The three subthemes of the Dallas meeting—Using History to Inform the Future, Building Civic Responsibility, and Strengthening the Profession—all represent vital issues that we need to address as a profession when we reflect upon social studies for the 21st century.

Another important wheel taking us toward the 21st century is our very first international meeting on the social studies. It will be held in Vancouver, Canada, June 22-25, 1988, on the campus of the University of British Columbia. The theme of this meeting is "The Pacific Rim," an area of the world that by any measure will have great influence in the 21st century. Cosponsored by NCSS, the University of British Columbia, the British Columbia Social Studies Teachers Association, and the Washington State Social Studies Council—with the strong support of other social studies organizations, governmental agencies, philanthropic foundations, and corporations—we will host social studies practitioners from all over the world. In Vancouver, we will touch the world, and the world will touch us.

We hope this first international meeting will be followed by other meetings held at different international sites and planned cooperatively by various councils of social studies around the world. Social studies for the 21st century in the United States must be informed by closer contact with educators of similar interest from other nations and regions. There is much to be learned by all parties through these international exchanges. The Vancouver conference is an important part of a larger effort to foster international consciousness and activity within the National Council.

A fourth wheel we have set in motion toward the 21st century is the NCSS Task Force on the Recruitment and Participation of Ethnic Minorities in the National Council and in the Profession. By the turn of the century, California will have a majority of minority populations; other states—for example, Texas and Florida—will soon follow. Blacks, with 35 million, will make up about 13 percent of our population; Hispanics, with 25 million, will comprise 10 percent.[3] Combined, blacks and Hispanics will comprise close to one-quarter of our total population. We can contrast those figures with the current NCSS membership of 2.7 percent blacks and 0.4 percent Hispanic.[4] Is there any doubt about the importance of our institutional and personal commitment to correct this enormous disparity? It is a matter of survival for the social studies profession.

We must ask ourselves not only who will learn social studies in the 21st century, but also who will teach it. Obviously, a greater percentage of our teachers must come from minority groups. We must begin now, in 1987. The NCSS Task Force, under the leadership of Jesus Garcia, is devoting special attention to recruiting ethnic minority students now in high school into social studies teaching.

As we move into the 21st century, there are four major societal trends and professional issues that will shape NCSS agenda—trends—and issues that one hopes will also be given careful attention by the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools. These are:

- The increasing technological, economic, political, and cultural interdependence of the world.
- The changing demographics and increasing pluralism of our society.
- The still unresolved relationship between history and the social sciences and content of the social studies.
- The special niche and concerns of the social studies teacher within the broader context of the professionalization of teaching.

These wheels, set in motion by the NCSS board and including others I have not mentioned, will go far toward understanding and addressing the challenges facing the council and the profession as we look to the 21st century.

It is my intent, in the remainder of my time, to examine in greater detail what I consider the most formidable challenge to social studies in the United States—*global interdependence.*

## Global Interdependence

In 1987, a broad spectrum of educators and policymakers have agreed that global interdependence must be taken seriously in the social studies curriculum in the United States.

Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and member of the Executive Committee of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, stated recently that "we are living in a global village. In the end, with all of our separations and divisions, we are deeply dependent upon each other."[5] Looking toward the 21st century, Boyer urged educators to develop curricula and teaching processes that will recognize our interdependence and strengthen the connections among us.

William J. Bennett, United States Secretary of Education, has also affirmed this need for schools to deal with the issues of global interdependence. In a recent major policy address, he emphasized that the United States now has "global responsibilities, and international politics have a more pressing claim on our attention than ever before. We need to know—and pass on to our children—as much about the world as we possibly can."[6]

Lynne Cheney, chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, in her recent report entitled *American Memory* noted that

> Self-knowledge requires that we understand other cultures. Daily life increasingly demands it. The world our children live and work in will seem even smaller than the one we know now. Its parts will be even more tightly linked by technology; its citizens, more interdependent.[7]

These are but three examples of the fact that educators and politicians, representing a diverse range of opinions about educational reform, have agreed that global interdependence must be taken into serious account in the social studies curriculum.

Very few of the major educational reform advocates, however, have offered serious proposals for upgrading the international studies dimensions of the school curriculum. When the reform movement literature turns to international studies, we typically find business as usual.

This silence is deafening.

## Nationalization of Knowledge

Indeed, when it comes to the humanities, some of the most recent and publicized reports of the reform literature are advocating changes in the social studies curriculum that can take us in a totally different direction, toward what can be termed the "nationalization of knowledge."

The "nationalization of knowledge" means the equation of knowledge from the humanities, which is taken to be universal, with the nonuniversal and restricted political configuration of the nation-state.

In *American Memory* Lynne Cheney writes:

> [W]e put our sense of *nationhood at risk* by failing to familiarize our young people with the story of how the society in which they live came to be. . . . Our history and literature give us symbols to share; they help us all, no matter how diverse our backgrounds, feel part of a common undertaking. . . . By allowing the erosion of our historical consciousness, we do to ourselves what an *unfriendly nation bent on our destruction might*.[8] [Emphasis added.]

This is a serious contradiction that should be challenged vigorously by a social studies profession with its eye on the wider horizons of the 21st century.

Assuredly, responsible citizenship is at the top of the social studies profession's priority list. Many of us, however, will be deeply concerned by the effort to employ the universality of knowledge from the humanities toward a narrow national purpose, notwithstanding that it comes wrapped in the golden leaf of civic virtue.

In a similar vein, E. D. Hirsch, Jr., in his popular book, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*, states:

> Although *nationalism* may be regrettable in some of its worldwide political effects, a master of national culture is essential to the mastery of the standard language in every modern nation. This point is important for educational policy, because educators often stress the virtues of multicultural education. . . . [However, multicultural education] should not be allowed to supplant or interfere with our schools' responsibility to ensure our children's mastery of American literate culture. . . . To teach the ways of one's own community has always been and still remains the essence of the education of our children, who enter neither a narrow tribal culture nor a transcendent world culture but a national literate culture. For profound historical reasons, *this is the way of the modern world. It will not change soon*, and it will certainly not change by educational policy alone.[9] [Emphasis added.]

An alternative view of communities of the future is offered by Daniel Bell, distinguished Harvard sociologist who argued recently in a *Daedalus* article, "The World and the United States in 2013," that the "*nation-state is becoming too small for the big problems of life, and too big for the small problems of life.*"[10]

If Bell's analysis is correct, then social studies, as citizen education for the 21st century, must be vitally concerned about the kind of knowledge that Hirsch disdains as "narrow tribal culture" or "transcendent world culture." Let's not place all our eggs of knowledge in the nation-state basket.

The very arrogation of the term 'American,' as used in titles by Cheney and Hirsch, is a disquieting use of the language. One might ask a Canadian or a Mexican, or for that matter a Costa Rican or an Argentine, about the meaning of 'American.' This cross-cultural *faux pas* by the authors reflects how little they may know the extent to which we in the United States are influenced by other "Americans." Or, though one is reluctant to believe it, the usage may reveal how little the authors care.

The "nationalization of knowledge" represented by "American" cultural literacy is simply wrongheaded. To go down that path in social studies education is, at best, inadequate. At worse, it will divert our attention from the underlying global trends that are already influencing our lives in critical ways. In the social studies, we need knowledge of where we are going, as well as where we have been. The nationalization of knowledge will not obtain the former and will distort the latter.

The paradox between the internationally determined causes of the avalanche of educational reform reports in the United States and the circle-the-wagons mentality reflected in slogans of cultural literacy is difficult to reconcile. Surely, our answers to the question of what knowledge is of greatest worth in the social studies as we face the 21st century will be found in something other than misguided, even if well-intentioned, slogans.

## Trading States vs. Territorial States

As an *example* of the kind of knowledge we need to consider in the debate about social studies for the 21st century, I wish to introduce and offer a brief analysis of the concepts of the Territorial State and the Trading State.

In his recent book, *The Rise of the Trading State*, Richard Rosecrance, Professor of International and Comparative Politics at Cornell, develops these two contrasting worldviews on the broad concept of global interdependence.[11] He points out that there exist major and significant differences between those who view the world in terms of the Territorial State and those who may see it in terms of the Trading State.

These two contrasting interpretations of the world suggest quite different purposes, curricular approaches, content selection, and teaching strategies for social studies educators. As noted earlier, agreement across a spectrum of ideologies in the United States that knowledge about the world is important in the social studies represents a very important first step. But the debate has only begun.

Some proponents of increased attention to world affairs in the social studies curriculum base their claims on *real-politik*—the struggle for supremacy among the world's great powers. They point to the historic, perhaps inevitable, conflict among the great powers over questions of ideology and territory. A second and more recent school of thought, represented by Rosecrance, places greater emphasis upon the growth of global economic interdependence in the post-World War II era and upon the rise of the Trading State as a logical corollary.

The Territorial State depends upon the direct control of territory and military strength to provide security and well-being for its citizens. World peace is established through a balance of power. In the Trading State, on the other hand, strength is derived from a nation's successful participation in an interdependent global trading network. Peace is maintained through a mutual realization that the cost-benefit ratio of cooperation is more favorable than that of aggression.

Both Japan and Germany in the years prior to World War II were prime examples of the Territorial State. Just as clearly in the last 40 years, both nations have developed into leading examples of the Trading State.

The Trading State idea has exerted a remarkable influence upon the current educational reform movement in the United States. Beginning in 1983 with *A Nation at Risk*, and followed by more recent reports, including

*A Nation Prepared* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy) and *To Secure the Blessings of Liberty* (American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), our education system has been challenged to meet the new realities of a global economic system.

The challenge of the 21st century, according to the reports, is for the United States to maintain a competitive advantage in the world economy. In the 1950s, by contrast, the challenge to educators came from Soviet space and military power. Both of these education reform movements have been propelled by an international challenge. The similarities between the decades of the 1950s and the 1980s are intriguing. One might, for example, substitute Arthur Bestor, well-known historian and a leading critic of social studies education in the 1950s, as author of some of the recent reports and not skip a beat or miss a paragraph.

But the differences are revealing. In the 1950s, we responded as a Territorial State; in the 1980s, we are responding as a Trading State. Sputnik had our undivided attention in 1957; in 1987, Toyota holds this dubious honor. The differences in these symbols mark a major shift in our worldview.

The statistics underpinning the Trading State point of view are impressive.[12] For example, 20 percent of all jobs in the United States are directly connected to international trade. This share has increased from only 7 percent in 1974. In other words, we have witnessed a 200 percent increase in jobs dependent upon international trade during the last decade. And international trade now accounts for 25 percent of our Gross National Product.

More than 7,000 United States corporations operate overseas, and these overseas operations bring in a third of all corporate profits in this nation. In addition, many foreign-owned corporations have major production and distribution operations in the United States. Individual states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee compete vigorously for the favors of foreign corporations and the employment they bring. Any state that has not created its own foreign trade office is out of step. It would seem, at times, that individual states have developed their own foreign policies as well.

Forty percent of our farmland produces food for export. A decline in the Soviet consumption of wheat grown in Kansas or in Chinese consumption of soybeans grown in Illinois has very important foreign policy ramifications. The current high unemployment rate in the port city of New Orleans, resulting in part from the decline of agricultural exports from farms of the grain belt, illustrates a blurring of the traditional lines between domestic and international politics. One cannot ignore our domestic economy in the study of international politics. And the international economy increasingly affects the domestic economy.

"To Secure the Blessings of Liberty," the AASCU report, chaired by Terrel Bell, former Secretary of Education, notes the close relationship between United States foreign policy and education for international understanding. The AASCU report urges a strong federal role in supporting international education programs in K-12 in order to:

- Provide students with an international perspective that reflects the world as it is today in realistic social, political, cultural, and economic terms.
- Provide students with international communications skills which will enable them to think, behave, and work effectively in a world of rapid change.[13]

Representing institutions of higher education that graduate more than 50 percent of all teachers annually certified in the nation, the AASCU report calls attention to the "need to concentrate on improving international education for future teachers in the nation's schools."

The AASCU report noted specifically that "many social studies teachers today are ill-informed regarding world affairs." The AASCU report might also have said that 45 percent of all social studies teachers teach United States history[14] and, for the most part, are trained in that discipline. In many cases, it is very likely that their training in United States history has failed to prepare them to deal with contemporary international politics and global interdependence.

In college history classrooms, as in high school, students are seldom afforded the opportunity to get beyond World War II. Thus, many of these teachers trained in the United States history are frequently unmotivated to stay current with the realities of the rapidly changing world. And they are unprepared to teach the new concepts, such as that of the Trading State, needed to understand this world. It would be easy for history teachers, so educated and so inclined, to agree with E. D. Hirsch, Jr., that the historical condition of the nation-state "will not change soon" and that their primary responsibility is to teach something called the national literate culture. Such a naive assumption flies in the face of the evidence and our daily experience, and will hardly prepare our successor generation for enlightened citizenship in the 21st century.

It can be argued, however, that social studies teachers in the United States, especially teachers of United States history, need very much the "transcendent world knowledge" that Hirsch dismisses out of hand. At a minimum, one must have transcendent world knowledge as a context for making informed judgments about what should be taught and learned in the name of "American" cultural literacy. In an interdependent world, it takes transcendent world knowledge to validate "American" cultural literacy. Members of the New York Stock Exchange must now be painfully aware of the exchange's global interdependence, and we must trust that the advocates of American cultural literacy are taking careful notes.

This significance of transcendent world knowledge in determining the meaning of American cultural literacy was made abundantly clear by John Rockwell, theater critic for the *New York Times*, in his recent article "Onstage in the Global Village":

> Twenty years after Marshall McLuhan's heyday, and a decade after he might have seemed passé, what he said seems to have come incontrovertibly true. We really do now live in a "global village" where nearly everyone—or at least the more sensitive among us, meaning our artists—is affected by everyone else. *It is increasingly difficult today for a Western artist, who once might have stayed safely within the course of his own culture's evolution, to remain apart from the traditions of other cultures.*[15] [Emphasis added.]

Nor is the discipline of history immune to these global influences. Theodore H. Von Laue, historian at Clark University, wrote recently:

> Academic history at present is passing through a *profound transition*. On the one side, powerfully entrenched, lies the professional tradition of local history, national history, specialized history. . . . That history probes into the past in even greater detail, producing more evidence about smaller subjects which often are part of a genealogy of research started many years ago. *On the other side, outside the sensibilities of that academic history, loom the larger contexts of meaning created by the global framework into which life is now set. It is in that world where our students, our young faculty, our public have to find their way. We live in One World. Our history, therefore, must be global history, history viewed in all its aspects from a global perspective.*[16] [Emphasis added.]

If United States history courses are to be a major vehicle for greater emphasis upon the international dimensions of our lives, then we will need a massive retraining of history teachers with federal support to bring them up to date. We shall hope that the institution that receives the $1.5 million funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities to establish a center for improving the teaching of history in the schools will include this important global perspective in its activities.

Without massive retraining, most teachers of United States history will most likely teach as they have been taught. They will thus continue to rely upon increasingly outmoded concepts such as the Territorial State. Will this choice make a difference in social studies classrooms? I will argue that it does.

The Territorial State, at its root, is based upon war as the ultimate weapon to acquire or to maintain the territory and resources necessary for its survival. *Lebensraum* and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere are two manifestations of this approach that bring bitter memories to Europeans and to Chinese and Southeast Asians. They linger as serious obstacles to the Trading State efforts of West Germany and Japan today.

The Territorial State premise to teaching about international politics tends to foster a know-your-enemy approach, including chauvinism, stereotyping, and a potential for dehumanizing the "other," whoever the other may be at the time. One cannot be successful in modern war unless the enemy is made subhuman. Modern warfare and propaganda have made this nightmare a reality for civilians and soldiers alike. The recent film *Platoon* has made us, in this country, painfully aware. Others, in most other nations of the world, have experienced it firsthand and have known it for a half-century.

The Territorial State approach, of course, neither requires such an aggressive program nor presages such dire outcomes. But it does provide the context and it prepares the mind for conflict. A real example is the state-mandated instruction in Florida called "Americanism vs. Communism" (AVC). By state law, AVC "shall lay particular emphasis upon the dangers of Communism, the ways to fight Communism, the evils of Communism, and the false doctrines of Communism."[17] And teachers shall use as a guide "the official reports of the House Committee on Un-American Activities and the Senate Internal Security Committee of the United States Congress." Neither, of course, exists today.

One might think this AVC requirement and others like it were anachronisms, vestiges of the 1950s, hanging, as it were, on the body of education like an appendix. But like an appendix, such anachronisms can become inflamed and spread infection quickly throughout the system. Attempts to place ideology and personality above the law and the Constitution, as in the Iran-Contra debacle, are reminders of the power of an anachronism.

In early October, I was startled to read in the back pages of the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *International Herald Tribune* a report of a little-publicized interview with President Reagan by a reporter with the *Washington Times*. In the interview, President Reagan strongly implied there is a growing Communist influence in the United States Congress and in the news media. He feared that we have dropped our guard against Communist subversion and that we are ill-served by a world-wide disinformation campaign. In breathtaking simplicity, the president "wistfully" recalled his testimony in earlier years on similar issues before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

> Remember . . . there was once a Congress in which they had a committee that would investigate even one of their own members if it was believed that that person had communist involvement or communist leanings. Well, they've done away with those committees. That shows the success of what the Soviets were able to do in this country with making it unfashionable to be anticommunist.[18]

These words of the president, spoken almost casually, confirm the potential reality of those dark days of the Territorial State, at the very time the Trading State is asserting an ever-growing claim on our present and future.

The Trading State approach, on the other hand, recognizes the interests of other nations and peoples as authentic. In the Trading State, a fundamental cultural reciprocity must be assumed. One cannot trade successfully on the international market without knowledge about other cultures and languages. New knowledge and skills are required in the Trading State. At a minimum, the Trading State requires a greatly expanded conception of American cultural literacy. More importantly, a new attitude is needed—that the benefit of any one nation is intermeshed with gains for all parties. The zero-sum assumption of the Territorial State, that a gain for you is a loss for me, is counterproductive in the Trading State.

Under Trading State assumptions, education can be directed toward learning second and third languages. Cultural pluralism can be viewed as a positive strength in the global marketplace. Cooperative learning and conflict negotiation skills are consistent with the overall goals of the Trading State model and may be viewed as necessary components of education. We should not, of course, discontinue our study of the Territorial State—for it makes a big difference in world affairs.

In summary, as we agree to a greater emphasis on teaching about global interdependence in our schools, we simultaneously need to reexamine its content in the light of current and predictable realities. And the notion of cultural literacy, as presented in the avalanche of national reports lamenting the low level of knowledge about the humanities, fails to meet this standard.

Social studies for the 21st century require a more expansive view of knowledge. By contrasting the concepts of the Territorial State and the Trading State, and by using other fresh tools of inquiry and analysis, we can begin making progress in this important task.

## The Crucial Role of the Social Studies Teachers

Finally then, what can be our role as social studies teachers as we help students prepare for the 21st century? I noted earlier the important statement of Ernest Boyer that, with our deep divisions, we need to search out the ways to strengthen the connections among us. We can build linkages between the past, present, and future. We can build bridges between others and ourselves. We can lessen the gap between rich and poor, between the franchised and the disfranchised, and between the powerful and the powerless.

In this task, we will help our successor generation value multicultural and multilingual education as having the potential of doubling and tripling our contribution to the global human condition, rather than dividing and fragmenting our own society; a generation willing to consider a "different" answer today, knowing that it may be a survival answer for tomorrow; a generation seeing the common purpose of education and history, in the words of Henry Steele Commager, as examining unexamined assumptions, and making puzzles of facts;[19] and a generation balancing the "me" with the "we."

George Counts spoke eloquently of the special role of the social studies teacher in our society in his address to the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of NCSS, held in New York in November 1935. His message is as vital today as it was in those uncertain times more than 50 years ago.

> The opportunity which the social-studies teacher has as a teacher at the present juncture in history would seem to be of the highest order—superior to that of the teacher in any other division of the curriculum. The age would seem to be made for him. Society has entered a period of profound transition; social life is marked by innumerable conflicts and contradictions, strains, tensions, and problems; and the present and coming generation will be called upon to make some of the great choices of history. . . . All of this would suggest that American society is in need of social-studies teachers as never before. Indeed, if there are any such things as "fundamentals" in education today, they would seem to be the social studies. The American people, as they face a basic crisis in their own and in world civilization are woefully lacking in both social knowledge and social understanding. Presumably, the teachers of the social studies are to help make up the deficiency. For is not their specialty this very field in which men must have illumination and guidance?[20]

In closing, I speak directly to the classroom teachers in the audience who symbolically represent all the social studies teachers in the United States. No other group can play such a significant mentoring role in preparing students to enter the 21st century. The challenge is captured in a selection from *Wind in the Willows,* the well-known children's book by Kenneth Grahame.

### The Riverbankers

"'So-this-is-a-river.' [The mole had never seen a river before.]
'The River,' corrected the Rat.

> 'What lies over there?' asked the Mole. . . .
>
> 'That? Oh, that's just the wild wood,' said the Rat shortly.
>
> 'We don't go there very much, we Riverbankers.'
>
> 'Aren't they—aren't they very nice people in there?' said the Mole a trifle nervously.
>
> 'W-E-L-L,' replied the Rat, 'let me see. The squirrels are all right. And the rabbits—some of 'em, the rabbits are a mixed lot. And there is Badger, of course . . . nobody interferes with him, they'd better not,' he added significantly. . . .
>
> 'Well, of course—there-are-others, weasels—and stoats and foxes and so on.'
>
> 'They're all right in a way—I'm very good friends with them—pass the time of day, when we meet, and all that—but. . . well, you can't really trust them and that's the fact.'
>
> 'And beyond the wild wood again?' The Mole asked: 'Where it's all blue and dim. . . ?'
>
> 'Beyond the wild wood comes the wide world,' said the Rat,
>
> 'And something that doesn't matter, either to you or me.'
>
> 'I've never been there, and I'm never going, nor you either, if you've got any sense at all. Don't ever refer to it again, please. Now then: Here's our backwater at last where we're going to have lunch.'"[21]

Looking back over 200 years, we remember the Constitutional Convention as a turning point in our history, as a time and a place for making choices that counted. *As social studies professionals, this now is our time for choice; let us choose the future.* Looking ahead as a profession, we shall help our students cross the river, enter the wild wood, and emerge eventually into the wide world of the 21st century.

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# 1988

# HISTORY, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND THE SOCIAL STUDIES

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**This presidential address was presented on November 20, 1988 to the 68th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Orlando, Florida. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 53 (March 1989): 148-154. ERIC Number: EJ 389 780.**

# 1988

## History, Social Sciences, and the Social Studies

*Donald O. Schneider*

Neither the term 'social studies' nor the field of academic study it designates is easily definable. Adopted early in this century to identify a set of courses including history, government and civics, economics, and sociology, the term was probably used not only for convenience, but also because it reflected the intellectual climate of the time (Hertzberg 1981; Barr, Barth, and Shermis 1977; Shermis 1987). As the term gained currency, it became more inclusive, encompassing all the social sciences. A half-century ago, Edgar Wesley identified this conception as "the social sciences simplified for pedagogical purposes" (1937).

A second conception is that of social studies as a unitary field that draws its content from various disciplines including, but not limited to, history and the social sciences to address the needs of students and society organized around topics, themes, problems, or issues. This fusion approach ignores disciplinary boundaries and typically emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving over acquisition of information.

A third conception is that of social studies as social science in which the basic constructs and methodologies of the respective disciplines are paramount. In this conception, the curriculum becomes a multidisciplinary rather than interdisciplinary experience for students, especially at the secondary level.

Another use of the term is even more ambiguous. Sometimes the social studies label is used to encompass a variety of subjects that do not seem to fit elsewhere in the curriculum, but are deemed to have a socializing or utilitarian function (Hertzberg 1981). Careers, personal finance, marriage, and family are examples of courses that have been labeled social studies.

Conceptions of the social studies usually begin with the general premise that the purpose of the social studies in the school curriculum is citi-

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zenship education. Although proponents may recognize that other facets of student experience within the formal and informal curriculum and beyond the school will shape and influence this socialization outcome, they either state directly or assume that social studies or the separate subjects that comprise the field are relevant and valuable to citizenship education. If the school's role in this socializing process is conceived primarily as providing significant information about the past and present society and in developing and reinforcing commonly agreed upon values and patterns of behavior, then a didactic mode of instruction prevails. By all accounts, this has been the case historically and remains the prevalent practice in our schools.

To those who see the essential task of schools and the social studies as developing individuals who can function as "citizen problem solvers," in the words of two former council presidents, Shirley Engle and Anna Ochoa (1988, 27), this conception of social studies is unacceptable. Instead, the mode shifts to the hypothetical, to critical analysis, and to reflective inquiry, as students engage in the direct in-depth study of persistent social problems. Questions include not only What?, Who?, Where?, When?, but What if?, How do we know?, So what?, and What can be done about it? as students deal with real-life situations that require informed, rational decisions on the basis of democratic ideals and values. Accounts of classroom practice indicate that this approach to social studies education is rarely found in our schools (Shaver, Davis, and Helburn 1979; Goodlad 1983; McNeil 1986; McNeil, Part 2, 1988).

As Hazel Hertzberg (1981, 172) noted in her review of a century of social studies reform efforts, the delineations of the appropriate education of citizens has been one of our field's most vexing questions. The competing positions were established early in the differing perspectives of the social efficiency reformers who envisioned a society in which people were socialized into their particular niches, and progressives who, drawing from John Dewey, conceived a more open, changing society where education could enable individuals to find their own places. In grappling with these contrasting conceptions, social studies educators have continually struggled with a set of related issues. One issue is whether there is a fixed body of knowledge to be imparted, or whether personal and social problems are to be the focus of social education. Following from this is the matter of how the curriculum is to be organized—its scope and sequence. Another issue is the nature and appropriateness of instructional methods and materials to fit both children's patterns of growth and development as well as community expectations.

### Social Studies in School and Out

The place of social studies in the curriculum must also be considered in the larger context of the purpose and role of schools in our society. Conceptions about education and the role of schools usually address in some way three fundamental considerations: the needs and expectations of the larger society, the needs, interests, and development of students, and the content or subject and its manner of presentation.

Some proponents may be concerned with the school's socializing function and helping students fit into society, for example, to fulfill an economic role. Others may be concerned with improving the society, in having students become knowledgeable about and able and willing to address fundamental social, political, economic, technological, and other issues. Some may be concerned with developing individuals to their fullest potential. Still others may be concerned primarily with advancing the frontiers of knowledge for its own sake (Eisner and Valance 1974).

In *What Schools Are For* (1979), John Goodlad identified twelve sets of educational goals typically assigned to schools clustering around four major areas of responsibility—academic, vocational, sociocivic, and personal development. The twelve goal clusters he identified are (1) mastery of basic skills or fundamental processes, (2) career education-vocational education, (3) intellectual development, (4) enculturation, (5) interpersonal relations, (6) autonomy, (7) citizenship, (8) creativity and aesthetic perception, (9) self-concept, (10) emotional and physical well-being, (11) moral and ethical behavior, and (12) self-realization. Of these twelve, the social studies address enculturation and citizenship directly and all but perhaps two or three of the others at least partly.

Much has been made of the frequent lack of connection, at least as perceived by students, between what they learn and how they learn it in school and life outside of school. In her 1987 presidential address to the American Education Research Association, Lauren Resnick (1987, 16) explored four broad contrasts between learning in and out of school:

> Schooling focuses on the individual's performance, whereas out-of-school mental work is often socially shared. Schooling aims to foster unaided thought, whereas mental work outside school usually involves cognitive tools. School cultivates symbolic thinking whereas mental activity outside school engages directly with objects and situations. Finally, schooling aims to teach general skills and knowledge, whereas situation-specific competencies dominate outside.

Resnick called for redirecting the focus of schooling to include more of the features of successful out-of-school functioning while at the same time reasserting the traditional civic and cultural functions of schools. Schools, she contended, should provide appropriate sites for students to engage in reflection and evaluation of the everyday world and become "communities of reasoned discourse on public issues." Her views, like those of progressive educators in the early part of this century, reflect the social and cultural milieu of the era. What is striking to those of us in social studies is the strong emphasis on education for citizenship as the ultimate purpose of schooling that Resnick and other like-minded observers claim.

## The Matter of Purpose

Why do we have to study this stuff? is a question most of us have heard from our students. I know it was one I heard from those not-so-eager students in U.S. and world history classes during my very first year of teaching. The question goes to the very heart of the current and continuing debate about the purpose, role, and nature of social studies in the school curriculum. History teachers might respond as one of my colleagues did when he urged: "Know history to defend yourself" (Hepburn 1982). He went on to elaborate (p. 1):

> History is used, or abused, every day by persons with whom students come into contact. History is used to influence students' perceptions, attitudes, choices and behavior. It is used to sell products and sell ideas. How? History carries the weight of authority. And, the consumer who knows nothing of the past can do little but accept historical "reasons" as authoritative. He is an easy mark.

Historians see many and varied purposes for history. For Arnold Toynbee (1969), history provided personal pleasure and a window on the world. For Oscar Handlin (1979, 403-13), history is a path to self-understanding, a means to seek truth, to teach the meaning of language through understanding others' use of the spoken and written word, and to provide context by helping locate discrete phenomena in the universe of things. Henry Steele Commager (1980, 78) echoed and elaborated on these views. He prefaced his discussion on the uses of history with the warning that history teaches what historians or those in power want taught, that it can be distorted or even prostituted as Hitler and others have done. But he goes on to cite its more benevolent uses. History can

- provide mankind with memory
- fire the imagination
- broaden intellectual horizons
- deepen sympathies
- summon up a great cloud of witnesses from the past to instruct and edify each new generation

- encourage each generation to believe it can build upon the past and perhaps progress into the future
- inculcate moral precepts

And what are these precepts? Commager lists perspective, humility, patience, tolerance, belief in the necessity of freedom, and the idea that individuality counts. History advocate Diane Ravitch (1988, 52) contends that

> Properly taught, history encourages the development of intelligence, civility and a sense of perspective. It endows students with a broad knowledge of other times, other cultures, other places; it presents cultural resources on which students may draw for the rest of their lives. These are the values and virtues gained through the study of history. Beyond these history needs no further justification.

In *American Memory*, Lynne Cheney (1987) claims that today's students have "no cultural memory" and that history is a kind of social cement that holds our society together. History enables us to realize our human potential, to reaffirm our humanity, and to pass on the wisdom of the ages.

For veteran high school teacher Robert Duffy (1988), history offers certain "cogencies." It offers perspective or the ability to see people, ideas, and events as part of a larger ongoing story; it provides encounters with personalities, values, and ideas different from one's own that require reflection; it brings an appreciation of relativeness in a pluralistic world; and it helps to develop analytical and skeptical habits of mind.

And what are the purposes for the social sciences in our schools? Accepting as a given the primary purpose of education for citizenship, geographers are likely to focus on the necessity of geographic literacy as fundamental to one's general education in the same way that history is (Winston 1986; Natoli and Gritzner 1988). Like history, geography may be viewed as both an ideographic (descriptive) and nomothetic (law-seeking) science rather than as one or the other (James and Martin 1981, 19). Geographers draw upon the other social and physical sciences as they study distribution and spatial arrangements of natural and human phenomena (Broek et al. 1980; Natoli 1986). Specifically, the study of geography according to the Joint Committee on Geographic Education of the National Council for Geographic Education and the Association of American Geographers (Committee on Geographic Education 1984) introduces and develops the concept of scale; organizes quantitative and qualitative data about regions for analysis and generalization and hypothesis generation; requires gathering of evidence to identify problems and seek solutions; suggests alternatives for future human settlement; demonstrates through maps physical and human patterns on the earth's surface; develops powers of observation in field work; and provides a context for understanding regional interrelationships.

Geography, supporters contend, has social utility, but is also worthy of study in its own right. It is viewed as appropriate for infusion and integration into social studies, but deserving of separate course status in the middle and secondary grades (Committee on Geographic Education 1984). Others contend that as part of the social studies, geographic knowledge and skills assist citizens to form enlightened opinions and make informed decisions on a range of community, regional, and global issues, gain perspectives about similarities and differences in ways people live and interact, see linkages among phenomena and issues from the local level to the global arena, and to cast informed votes for government leaders relative to their stands on complex issues (Winston 1986, 43). Geographers also point to career opportunities for those attracted to the geographic perspective as a purpose for including geography in the curriculum (Broek et al. 1980; Natoli 1988). With the development of *Guidelines for Geographic Education: Elementary and Secondary Schools* in which the Joint Committee on Geographic Education (Committee on Geographic Education 1984) specified five fundamental themes as the core of geographic study—Location, Place, Relationships within Places, Movement, and Regions—geography for schools has attained greater coherence that has enabled the discipline to renew a powerful claim for a place in the social studies curriculum.

Civics, government, and political science have long been part of social studies education in the United States. As Shaver and Knight (1986, 71) have noted, however, the basic issue remains "whether the curriculum for elementary and secondary school students is to reflect essentially scholarly interests of those in the field of political science and government or whether there is some broader, more encompassing civic purpose for K-12 social studies education." Courses organized from these differing perspectives would be quite different.

Political scientists are less agreed than geographers on the organizing elements for a disciplinary perspective. The traditional institutional-structural approach leads to a focus on government, its historical development, and on political norms; the newer scientific strand focuses on political behavior and theory. The former gave rise to traditional civics and government courses; the latter to political behavior courses developed in the era of the "New Social Studies" two decades ago. More recently, concern with public policy questions has shifted the field back to normative and value questions (Straayer 1980; Gunnell 1986). In addition to enabling citizens to understand government and political behavior, political scientists serve a utilitarian function by engaging in the prediction and analysis of probable political consequences of policies, strategies, and actions (Straayer 1980).

Social studies conceived as citizenship education as the overarching purpose may well draw on political science especially in relation to political theory, policy study, and citizen action, but those who advocate this conception paint with a much broader brush. They typically offer multidimensional rationales that address such matters as the nature and function of schools, curriculum goals, the nature of knowledge, the nature of learning, definition of community, social realities and human diversity, the meaning, values, and attributes of democracy, and American core values, as they focus on decision making and participation in school and community (Shaver 1977; Butts 1980; Butts 1988; Engle and Ochoa 1988).

The value of economics may be couched in terms of preparation for personal functioning in society and for the full understanding of enduring issues and their immediate manifestation at all levels of society. Current discussions of economic literacy usually suggest a body of economic content to be learned. The purpose of learning this body of principles, concepts, and information is to apply this knowledge to problems and in so doing to acquire the capacity to interpret and to understand analyses of others and the capacity to analyze personally new and unique problems in order to make reasoned decisions or judgments (Warmke, Muessig, and Miller 1980; Miller 1988).

Historically there have been disagreements over both the purpose and approach to teaching economics in our schools. One issue revolved around the proper balance between personal economics with an emphasis on consumer and career education, and citizenship education with an emphasis on the analytical social science dimension. Another issue has been whether to emphasize the conceptual/theoretical side, to focus on the practical or concrete situation, or blend the two. A third concern has been the place of controversial issues and decision making (Armento 1986).

These differences about economics in the school have been matched by the differences that have existed among scholars in the discipline itself on a wide range of matters. Economists have sharply disagreed over definitions of such basic terms as 'capital,' 'savings,' and 'profit,' on the validity of various economic models they employ in analysis, and on the kinds of policies to be advocated—whether Keynesian, supply-side, or other (VanHoose and Becker 1986).

The other social sciences—anthropology, psychology, and sociology—have played a lesser, although not unimportant, role in K-12 social studies than have history, geography, political science, and economics. Scholars in each of these disciplines have also differed in their views of the nature and scope of their field and its methodologies and thus have often pursued different questions using different approaches. Anthropology, for example, has both scientific and humanistic traditions. Anthropologists' concerns with human evolution and the systematic comparative analysis of sociocultural data of ethnic groups have contributed content to the K-12 social studies curriculum over the years, but discrete study of anthropology in schools is mostly a result of a half-dozen or so curriculum projects that emerged in the 1960s. Anthropology can contribute key insights into understanding what it means to be human. Among them are (Pelto and Muessig 1980; Bohannan 1985; Dynneson 1986; Owen 1986):

- Human behavior is not mandated by inborn biological imperatives; culture and learning are preeminent factors in human action.
- The range of human cultural potential—linguistic, artistic, intellectual, and other—appears to be shared widely among human societies and by members of both sexes.
- Human cultures differ because of their particular histories and settings, but have similarities in their form and structure; they are logical and coherent when understood from within.
- Each human being is a premise-guided creature, but often these premises are unconsciously held.

What anthropology can assist us in doing is to come to a recognition and acceptance of these insights. Perhaps an even larger purpose was captured by the designers of *Man: A Course of Study* in the questions they raised: "What is human about human beings? How did they get that way? How can they be made more so?" (Curriculum Development Associates 1972).

Of the three disciplines, sociology is most frequently found as a separate course in the curriculum at the secondary level. It has also had some presence in the primary grades although its inclusion in the early grades as exemplified in the expanding environments organization has been perceived by some to be so watered down and commonplace as to be useless (Ravitch 1987). One of the key uses of sociology, as with the other social sciences, is to provide a different lens through which to view human behavior. In this case, the focus is on the interaction of groups and individuals. Of concern is how that interaction affects both the group and the individual. Sociologists identify patterns of behavior and roles individuals play within organizations. They look for relationships in these patterns within and across groups and organizations. They also search for relationships between aspects of personality and social behavior. They are also interested in how social patterns change over time. Sociology has also taken on an applied role as those trained in the discipline attempt to apply research-based propositions to a whole range of social problems. Sociology also informs us about a host of commonly used terms such as 'alienation,' 'class,' 'community,' 'crowd,' 'interaction,' 'role,' 'social change,' 'stratification,' 'rural,' 'suburban,' and 'urban,' knowledge of which comprises part of what is now popularly called literacy (Kitchens and Muessig 1980; Eshleman 1986; Wilson 1987).

Psychology has also enriched our language with a host of commonly used concepts and terms. A popular elective in high school, psychology has had virtually no direct role to play in the elementary school curriculum. A characteristic of psychology is its empirical orientation, which demands that theory and conceptions be put to the test. Concrete testable hypotheses are a hallmark of the classical scientific tradition. The field of psychology, however, has been characterized by divergent theoretical constructs ranging from behaviorism and psychoanalysis that view the organism as molded by forces it cannot readily control, if at all, to more dynamic and currently more popular theories of cognitive processing. Historically, the inclusion of psychology in the high school curriculum served a socializing function and had two goals: to assist students in understanding and improving their own personal development and to foster improved human relations. In the last two decades, a third approach has been added—that of psychology as a social science focusing on such topics as conditioning and learning, personality, heredity, and intelligence (Schwartz 1982; Bare 1986; Wertheimer et al. 1986).

In summary, the purposes and function of history and the social studies in school programs are seen as providing alternative perspectives for viewing human societies in their physical and cultural contexts; as providing a means for coming to know one's own cultural and historical traditions; as providing means for understanding both common and unique patterns of human development and behavior both temporarily and spatially; and as providing opportunity and means for engaging in and refining critical thinking about issues and problems that have personal and social significance.

## Content and Instruction

And what of content and instruction? The recent reform debate has been joined around the issue of the need for, and the nature of, a common core of knowledge. E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (1987), William Bennett (1987; 1988), Lynne Cheney (1987), Diane Ravitch (1988), Paul Gagnon (1987), and the American Federation of Teachers (1987), among others, have called for a common core of learning built around history and the humanities or around history, geography, and civic education. Gagnon (1987, 19) put the issue this way: "The fate of the entire educational reform movement, from kindergarten through college, depends upon the willingness of educators to take up the intellectual challenge of deciding upon a common core of what is most worth learning in late 20th-century American society, as well as where it most critically affects education for intelligent citizenship." He goes on to identify and refute the major arguments against a common core as he sees them—that our culture is too fragmented, and thus a common core would be oppressive and insulting; that a common core would be too elitist and unsuited to various groups of students; and that the explosion of knowledge and rapid change in modern life would render any particular knowledge obsolete. He thus makes no apology but rather argues forcefully for his proposal to emphasize Western civilization and the evolution of democracy at the core of world history. While agreeing that we need to study Western civilization to understand our past, Ernest Boyer warns that "we need to study non-Western cultures to understand our future" (Brandt 1988, 6).

Hirsch (1987) and Cheney (1987) in arguing for cultural literacy find fault not only with curriculum fragmentation, but with the emphasis on process and skills development devoid of substantive core knowledge. Ravitch (1987) attacked the expanding environments curriculum organization, content, and textbooks. She proposed instead that the necessary background knowledge needed for cultural literacy found in myths, legends, fairy tales, folktales, and stories about historical events and persons, heroes and villains formerly included in our schools should be reintroduced in place of what she labeled "tot sociology." Former Secretary of Education, William Bennett's proposals for elementary (1988) and secondary schools (1987) emphasize history, geography, and civics throughout, beginning in the early grades with a strong focus on U.S. customs, traditions, national symbols, stories that stress desirable values and elements of character, and civic responsibility.

The American Federation of Teachers (1987, 20) urges a reordering of the social studies curriculum around a required core of history of the "United States and of democratic civilization, . . . American government and world geography, and of at least one non-Western society in depth." Added to this core would be an introduction to the perspectives of the various social sciences and a realistic, unsentimental, and comparative study of other nations—their politics, ideology, economics, and cultures.

The advocacy for identifying and teaching a body of core information, concepts, and ideas has led other educators to warn of the dangers of "trivial pursuit" (Wiggins 1987; Estes, Gutman, and Harrison 1988; Gross 1988). They contend that students often fail to demonstrate knowledge of essential material despite having been exposed to it because they did not engage in thoughtful interaction with the material. Coverage does not necessarily equate with student learning. Assessments of student achievement in this country over the last two decades have consistently yielded disappointingly, even alarmingly, poor results. The failure of students to demonstrate fundamental knowledge of history has been found, more recently, in the National Assessment of Educational Progress test of 17-year-olds (Ravitch and Finn 1987). The results, an average score of 54.5 percent on the 141-question history test, and the conclusion drawn by the report's authors—"a shameful level of performance"—is reminiscent of similar results on history tests and the subsequent reaction over four decades earlier during the height of World War II (Hertzberg 1981, 69-70; Downey and Levstik 1988). As reviewers of these testing efforts have warned, the assessments may "tell us more about the expectation of test developers than what history the test takers know or how they know it. . . or the quality of student's historical thinking" (Downey and Levstik 1988, 337).

Instead of adding more to be covered in the curriculum, what we need to do according to the Maryland Thinking Collaborative is to move "from cultural literacy to cultural thoughtfulness" (Worsham 1988, 20). The Coalition of Essential Schools (Wiggins 1987) takes a similar position and operates under the principle earlier expressed by Theodore Sizer in *Horace's Compromise* (1984), that "Less is More." Committed to the view that both content and process are important, Grant Wiggins of the coalition suggests organizing courses around essential questions. He offers (p. 12) this example for U.S. history: "Is the United States more or less of a 'pure' democracy now than at its founding?" Following Sizer's suggestions, the coalition emphasizes "student-as-performer" and "teacher-as-coach." Students are expected to participate in "exhibitions" using research projects and other devices that permit them to demonstrate "knowledge-in-use."

The importance of both process and content in the teaching of history and the social sciences has long been argued by thoughtful scholars and educators (Johnson 1940; Hertzberg 1981, 1988). The Teacher Assessment Project at Stanford University is finding additional evidence of this fusion in its series of "wisdom of practice" studies centering on teachers of excellence in history instruction. Project researchers have found that, despite differences in teaching styles and classroom organization, ranging from traditional to the nontraditional, students seem to be affected in the same positive ways; students in classrooms of these teachers were engaged and grappling with ideas and they were excited and interested. The master teachers had visions of history and tried to have students participate in those visions. Each had a rich storehouse of knowledge, and each found means to create what the researchers labeled as an "instructional representation"—a way of adjusting instruction to meet the needs, motivations, and abilities of learners. What is clear is that the expert teachers have to blend knowledge about history, knowledge about teaching, and knowledge about learners in ways that suggest the complexity of teaching is not likely to be tapped by most of the models of teacher competency currently in use (Wineburg and Wilson 1988). What is true of excellent high school history teaching is likely to be true as well of excellence in teaching social studies at all grade levels.

Unfortunately, as with the composite teacher, Horace, so vividly described by Sizer (1984), many classroom teachers feel compelled to make compromises and in fact teaching becomes something short of the excellence that might otherwise be achieved. Recent documentation of this phenomenon has been provided by Linda McNeil in *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge* (1986). She describes defensive teaching strategies employed by teachers that limited their success in achieving the goals they espoused and belied the knowledge they possessed of their field and of the learning process. What we need to remember in the midst of the current reform debate is that the essential elements for excellence in teaching and learning are teachers and students and their interactive engagements with the subject.

Meaningful research as a guide to practice in teaching social studies is rather limited by comparison to research in other academic fields, but nevertheless too extensive to be summarized in any detail here. Some generalizations are in order, however. Analyses of research tend to confirm that young children can learn and apply selected social science concepts and ideas earlier than had been assumed a few decades ago. Although abstract thinking, manipulation of data, understanding of sophisticated temporal and spatial relationships go beyond the capacities of younger children, they are capable of more mature comprehension and thinking than often assumed when provided with appropriate background and learning experiences. Just as individuals go through stages of cognitive development, they go through stages in moral development of attitudes toward a host of "others": authority figures, those from other subgroups, nations, or cultures. Theories and supporting research on information processing and schema development suggest that learning of information in a way that facilitates initial conceptual development with later elaboration to enrich and expand students' knowledge base is important to one's comprehension of the physical and social world. Teachers need to present students with information and ideas and then require them to apply these in new settings, including problem-solving situations. Thus the elementary grades and especially the middle grades seem to be an especially crucial time for social learning and for value and attitude formation. The conclusions drawn by Matthew Downey and Linda Levstik (1988) in their review of research on the teaching and learning of history are of particular interest in view of the recent attention given to the role of history in the curriculum. Among their conclusions they offered the following:

- Children know more about time and history than has been thought and are capable of more mature thinking when they possess adequate background information; earlier experience with history therefore seems warranted.
- A shallow cultural literacy approach to concept development should be avoided. What is needed is to focus on identifying subject matter that is both culturally significant and pedagogically engaging.
- Content, context, and process are all important in teaching and learning history. Teacher knowledge of content is not sufficient for effective teaching. How one learns influences what is learned. Students need to be engaged, and engagement with history is both a pedagogical and a content concern.
- Narrative accounts such as historical fiction, biographies, journals, letters, etc., are frequently recommended as supplements to or replacements for textbooks. There is little research on this matter so those materials should be used cautiously. Students must be taught to be critical users of narrative materials as they do not come to this perspective spontaneously.
- Arrangements for K-6 social studies other than the expanding environments design should be explored and researched since the traditional design does not have a rationale grounded in research. (For example, Kieran Egan 1978, 1979, 1983, advocates a four-stage model of historical thinking that suggests a curriculum design that differs significantly from the expanding environments pattern.)
- Good teaching cannot be engineered into existence; an engineering approach may in fact force out good teaching (see McNeil 1986, 1988, Part 3, on this point). To avoid reducing teachers to the role of technicians, we need to document excellence in teaching in all its varieties.

(For other examples of reviews of research and implications for classroom practice, see Branson and Torney-Purta 1982; Hepburn 1983; Atwood 1986; Davis et al. 1987; Hoge and Crump 1988.)

## Textbooks

One of the chief culprits cited by school critics in general, and social studies critics in particular, is the textbook (FitzGerald 1979; Davis et al. 1986; Gagnon 1987; Carroll et al. 1987; Larkins, Hawkins, and Gilmore 1987; Ravitch 1987; Bennett 1988; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988a, 1988b). Textbooks, it is charged, are too often *the course*. They provide the organizational basis for year-to-year and day-to-day instruction. Given their central role in curriculum organization and classroom instruction, their shortcomings are magnified. And what are these shortcomings? The list is extensive indeed. They are criticized as flawed in content and manner of presentation. They are scored for covering too much so that they become little more than illustrated dictionaries; yet the same books may be faulted for the deletions of this or that topic (Butts 1988, 24-26). What is treated, reviewers contend, is presented poorly. They present no sense of structure, of what is really important and meaningful, and what less so. For example, history textbooks, it is charged, fail to provide context and to discuss the significance of events and issues, or to present the real-life drama that unfolded in times past, and so are mere chronologies (FitzGerald 1979; Gagnon 1987; Sewall 1987). Geography, government, and other social science textbooks are seen as little more than compendia of terms and facts that rival in their scope of coverage introductory, foreign language textbooks. Elementary grade social studies textbooks, especially for the primary grades, are condemned as worthless for their commonplace and vacuous content (Larkins, Hawkins, and Gilmore 1987).

Then there is the matter of pedestrian or downright poor writing that makes these materials dull, boring, and incomprehensible despite, and perhaps because of, publishers' efforts to enhance their "readability." Critics assert that textbooks are products of a system that is driven by what is kindly referred to as the profit motive, less kindly as greed, buffeted by the requirements of educational bureaucracies and demands of various pressure groups, but not taken seriously by academic scholars except as a source of income. On the one hand, authors and publishers are condemned as too slow to incorporate recent scholarship, but too quick to respond to the latest fads and fashions washing over the schools.

This depressing picture comes largely from those other than classroom teachers, who may themselves hold a different perspective. There is some evidence that teachers do not subscribe to the view that the quality of textbooks is declining, or that textbooks are flat, unimaginative, and mindless collections of information and meaningless exercises (Metcalf 1988; Rogers 1988). In contrast, they apparently see textbooks are necessary references that provide an organizing framework for the curriculum, the best of which highlight important ideas, are attractive, have useful and appropriate student activities, and are realistic and relevant to students' lives. In distinguishing between good and poor textbooks, teachers may complain, as other critics do, that some are too much like catalogs of information. Teachers are especially concerned that textbooks be practical and easily comprehended by students. Given the fact that nearly half our states have some form of textbook-adoption system, and included among them are large population states such as California, Florida, and Texas, the mandating of textbook content and organization might well be effective in bringing about some change in the social studies curriculum. But state textbook mandates may not bring a change in the way social studies are taught for at least a couple of reasons. First, there is also some evidence that textbooks may not be as dominant in actual instruction as is thought to be the case. Student reading of textbooks, for example, may be rather limited, with information coming more from lecture and films than from textbooks (Downey and Levstik 1988). Second, as a number of observers have noted, the dominant historical feature of social studies instruction has been the stability of traditional patterns of classroom practice (Shaver, Davis, and Helburn 1979; Morrissett et al. 1982; Shaver and Knight 1986).

## Toward a New Social Studies?

Social studies are more than the sum total of the individual disciplines, but they are also less. The social studies have as a major goal the integration of content and perspectives for the purpose of citizenship education, a goal rarely directly espoused by the individual disciplines themselves. The perspectives, insights, and the body of knowledge generated by scholars in the disciplines and the methodologies they employ may indeed be used and even be vital in the task of civic education, but they are not sufficient. Whereas scholars within the disciplines have become increasingly specialized, citizens need a broad integrative education that uses multiple perspectives and analytical tools. The fragmentation brought on by ever narrower specialization has transformed what was once an avocation into a profession. This transformation of the academic disciplines has brought a questioning of the usefulness and significance of what sometimes appears to be rather esoteric research. This phenomenon led historian Theodore S. Hamerow (1988) to conclude that with regard to history "the result has been a serious diminution of the role of historical study in American life."

The current intellectual social and political ferment revolving around schooling and the role of the disciplines has had, however, a beneficial effect. Reformers are focusing on some key questions. The functions and purposes of schooling are being reexamined. The perennial question of "What knowledge is of most worth?" is once again being debated. There has been a realization once again that schools have been asked to do too much and that difficult choices will have to be made as to what schools should do and can do best. The debate about the composition and substance of a required core curriculum, may prove salutary in the long run, although the current reality seems one of chaos, especially in social studies. Historians create alliances with educators and call for a history-based curriculum, the most recent evidence of which can be found in the report of the Bradley Commission on History in Schools (Jackson 1988). Geographers, too, create alliances and call for more infusion of geography in elementary grades and separate courses at the secondary level (Committee on Geographic Education 1984). Economic educators with the network of centers throughout the nation continue to develop infusion and separate course materials based on the framework developed over a decade ago (Hansen, Bach, Calderwood, and Saunders 1977).

And the list of special interest groups that push for inclusion in the social studies continues to grow. That all that is urged upon us to include in the social studies cannot be included has been made painfully clear to students if not to adult critics. Whereas the risk of ever more inclusion of content in the curriculum poses the risk of greater incoherence, there is also risk at the other end of the pendulum swing—a single mandated curriculum imposed on schools and reinforced through a variety of means. The factory-based competency model of education with its dependence on narrowly conceived testing programs may short-circuit meaningful change. For example, judging school quality and tying teacher career-ladder advancement to student test performance will not necessarily achieve desired ends such as enhancement of our national economic competitiveness or the establishment of benchmarks of educational excellence. State legislatures and state departments of education could lock in place, through law or mandate, currently advocated reform curriculum structures and instructional practices that subsequent experience and research may demonstrate fall short of expectations at the school and classroom level.

A significant missing dimension in the current reform movement has been identified by Ernest Boyer, president of Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and co-chair of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, when he recently observed that what is now needed is consideration of "how various disciplines can serve larger, more integrative ends" (Brandt 1988, 5). He cited social studies along with science as the two high school subjects most in need of revision, but strongly rejected the view that substituting history and geography was the answer.

Instead, he called for a fresh integrative look at something on the order of *Man, A Course of Study* with its powerful cross-cultural approach.

Is such a new conception on the horizon? I am uncertain, but efforts currently under way offer some possibilities. One intriguing effort is the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Project 2061, which will release in 1989 its first-phase report, *Science for All Americans*. The report will attempt to define the dimensions of scientific literacy encompassing physical, biological, and social science, mathematics, and technology that adult citizens of the 21st century should know. Subsequent efforts and reports will consider curriculum and instruction. Whether this project will result in a truly integrative curriculum is unclear, but it merits consideration.

Another promising integrative effort is the CIVITAS project, a joint project of the Council for the Advancement of Citizenship, of which NCSS is a member, and the Center for Civic Education with funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The goal of the project is to develop a framework that identifies the goals, content, process, and experiences considered vital in developing effective citizenship education programs. The purpose of the framework is to serve as a guide and resource for state departments of education and school districts in developing their own specific programs.

The National Commission on Social Studies will issue a report on curriculum in 1989. We in NCSS will continue our work on scope and sequence models in response to the House of Delegates 1987 resolution to adopt three alternative models from among those previously developed (Jarolimek 1984; Bragaw 1986) and will publish those models within the year.

None of this will, of course, end debate on the purpose, substance, and organization of the social studies curriculum. Perhaps as Fred Newmann (1988, 436) suggests, the choice about specific curriculum content will ultimately come down to "a matter of taste, and consensus will be determined . . . by horse trading between parties to assure a place for their favorite people, works, or historical events." Nevertheless, we must seek to establish those broad criteria that permit the bargaining to take place. If we do not achieve broad agreement at least on the criteria while we have the opportunity, then we could well move toward greater divisiveness and fragmentation among the disciplines on which the social studies rest, or alternatively, we could move toward politically mandated programs that, once established, may prove resistant to modification and change.

For me, these broad criteria should address at least the following:

1. What meaning do we wish students to draw from their study of social studies? How is that meaning to be obtained? Teachers may provide meaning by what they say and do. Students, in the final

analysis, however, must accept the meaning they receive as plausible and must internalize that sense of meaning or they must construct their own meaning from their instructional experiences in the larger context of all other in-school and out-of-school experiences.

2. How can opportunities for student learning and practice of principles of democratic citizenship be systematically incorporated into school and community activities so that these experiences provide continuity rather than discontinuity between life in classrooms and life outside? What is the appropriate sequence of such experiences?
3. What is the appropriate blend of history, the social sciences, and other related disciplines as sources of descriptive information, and as analytical, meaning-making perspectives conducive to inquiry, imagination, and reflection? In history, for example, I have in mind the conception of history as story vs. history as reflected in historian Carl Becker's words "Everyman his own historian" (Becker 1935).
4. Which persistent historical issues and which emerging issues of human experience do we need to embed in the social studies curriculum for in-depth and perhaps repeated study? At what levels and in what form can these issues best be addressed, given student abilities, interests, and development patterns and the always persistent question of educational opportunity costs?
5. Where, how, and for what purpose should we integrate and infuse content, perspectives, and methodologies from various disciplines and where are the social studies most appropriately organized around a single discipline?

The role of the disciplines remains a divisive issue in the field. By and large, the social studies have remained a federation of separate subjects. Attempts at fusion or synthesis have had some success at the elementary school level, less so at the secondary level, primarily with civics and problems of democracy courses, both of which have declined as offerings or disappeared from school curricula entirely. Recent advocacy by a group of like-minded academicians, educators, and others to abandon the concept of social studies is but a recent manifestation of the issue that has remained unsettled since social studies became a curriculum entity. But it need not remain that way. Out of the current ferment can come the realization that social studies as an organizer of insights, propositions, content, and methodologies from history, the social sciences, and other scholarly fields, are not only useful, but necessary for the school to fulfill its role in the civic education of youth. Synthesis and integration are what we need. The task before us is to establish the criteria and create the basis for a new social studies that preserves the best of past and current practice, but also addresses emerging realities and 21st-century prospects and needs for the social education of citizens in our ever-changing and globally linked society.

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# 1989

# THE SOCIAL STUDIES: GATEWAY TO CITIZEN VOICE, VISION, AND VITALITY

*Mary A. McFarland*

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**This presidential address was presented on November 12, 1989 to the 69th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at St. Louis, Missouri. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 54 (February 1990): 100-104. ERIC Number: EJ 404 472.**

## 1989

# The Social Studies: Gateway to Citizen Voice, Vision, and Vitality

*Mary A. McFarland*

Social Studies education is a gateway experience. The knowledge, skills, dispositions, and actions encouraged by social studies education provide an extraordinary gateway—a gateway which, on one side, leads our students to understand how history has handed them the present and on the other side, provides the possibility of strong participatory citizenship—the clear choice to lead a productive personal life, to support and strengthen our democratic republic, to promote the health and well-being of our small and shrinking home, the earth—in short, to create the future.

The NCSS Board of Directors deems civic education so important within social studies education that "participatory citizenship" has been adopted as the council's leadership theme for the next two years. Were I to choose a theme I have believed in as more important than any other within the social studies throughout my own professional career, it would be promoting the active role of social studies education in contributing to strong participatory citizenship. In fact, I will argue that the social studies present the gateway content, processes, and dispositions within the curriculum, that when taught with enthusiasm, competence, and integrity have the power to influence students toward deeply rooted, tenacious, effective, and meaningful participatory citizenship. Thus, the title of my address—The Social Studies: Gateway to Citizen Voice, Vision, and Vitality.

### Citizen Voice

First, let us consider citizen voice. The question here is: How does social studies education help each student find and inform his or her own citizen voice? Social studies education is a gateway to citizen voice—leading each student to answer the fundamental questions, Who am I? What is my heritage? What is important to know? What do I believe? What is it that I value so deeply that I will give my voice to it—and speak out for it?

The goal is to develop a confident citizen voice, but also (and more important) an informed citizen voice. The process parallels the means by which each infant first finds his or her own personal voice. Recall a baby's early babbles—inadequate, incomprehensible, uncommunicative; yet the first necessary stage in finding a meaningful personal voice. Next emerges indiscriminate labeling, over-simplifying, and overgeneralizing—for the baby, all four-legged creatures at first become "dog." Later, with maturity and judgment, discriminations become increasingly refined because the child is experiencing, the child is learning. Isn't this the ultimate stage—the stage we all find ourselves in for the rest of our lives—the "is learning" stage—the dynamic stage of ever differentiating, correcting, refining, and adding to what we know?

I emphasize this point with a story from Stephen W. Hawking's book, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*. Hawking (1988, 1), claims that

> a well-known scientist once gave a public lecture on astronomy. He described how the earth orbits around the sun and how the sun, in turn, orbits around the center of a vast collection of stars called our galaxy. At the end of the lecture, a little old lady at the back of the room got up and said: "What you have told us [young man] is rubbish. The world is really a flat plate supported on the back of a giant tortoise." The scientist gave a superior smile before replying, "[Well, madam,] What is the tortoise standing on?" "You're very clever, young man, very clever," said the old lady. "But it's turtles all the way down!"

The inclination is for us to assume that Hawking finds the woman's thought mindless and absurd—but beware, instead he uses the story to pose this haunting question, Why do we think we know better? and then proceeds to raise a half-dozen issues about the nature of the universe—questions that remain unanswered by the voices of the world's greatest scientists at this very moment. He concludes that someday in the future the theories proposed to resolve these current unanswered mysteries may seem as obviously true to us as the earth orbiting the sun—or as improbable as the notion of a tower of tortoises. His point is that for the moment we know what we know, but that moment by moment what we know is being revised, updated and transformed, turned upside down into more serviceable knowledge.

The point for us as social studies educators is that we, and the students we urge toward full citizenship, are always in the process of discovering various versions of the legacy of the past, learning more daily about the tumultuous present, and revising constantly what we thought we already knew. What do the social studies contribute to this process of discovery and revision of the informed citizen voice? From the earliest years of pre-school and kindergarten through young adulthood, the social studies steadily build the special content and experiential base needed by each student to discover his or her own citizen voice, the research skills needed to revise and extend that voice, and the distinctive dispositions needed by students and needed for a lifetime by citizens—the uncommon, splendid, civic dispositions of reflection, connectedness, commitment, and stewardship that are basic to worthy civic action.

Social studies educators bring students face to face with *history* and its perspective on the past triumphs and trials—the history of our own nation and nations all over the globe. Social studies educators bring students face to face with *geography* and its contribution to understanding the significance and relationship of locations at home and abroad. Social studies educators bring students face to face with the social sciences: *anthropology* and its insights into our own and other cultures; *psychology* and its view of individuals—their talents, abilities, and uniqueness; *sociology* and its clarification of the types, functions, and behaviors of groups; *economics* and its attention to the production and distribution of goods and services; *political science* and its focus on governments—their institutions, processes, and definitions of the relationship of governments to citizens; and *social studies education*—the great integrating field that prepares students to combine and to apply this learning to real, deeply felt human needs.

What could be more crucial? What could be more basic than the knowledge of who we are, what we believe in, where we are located in time and space? What could possibly be more important than the knowledge that the social studies provide about how we relate to others around us and across the span of oceans and centuries? What could be more fundamental than the clarion message of the social studies, that we are increasingly linked to every other human being in what is fast becoming the major global effort of all time—the effort to sustain life on earth, in fact, the effort to survive ourselves and pass along an inhabitable earth-home to those we love and to humans we will never meet in successor generations.

The social studies provide knowledge that is absolutely essential to children and youth in a democratic republic. We owe it to them to move beyond the myth of the usefulness of the thousands of bits and pieces of purely trivial knowledge to a commitment to the substantial time and effort—the continual life-long effort required to form the bits and pieces together into meaningful wholes—into in-depth citizen knowledge.

Richard Saul Wurman (1989, 27-33) in his book, *Information Anxiety*, points out that the amount of information is now doubling every four to five years, that the number of books in top libraries doubles every fourteen years, a single weekday edition of the *New York Times* contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime in seventeenth-century England, and if you have a copy of the November 13, 1987 edition of The *New York Times*, you have a landmark edition which was 1,612 pages long and weighed a hefty 12 pounds. Yet, the challenge is not to know everything. It is clear that we must not collect isolated bits of information and call that knowing. Let us not mistake our yearly average consumption of 3,000 notices and forms, 100 newspapers, 36 magazines, 2,463 hours of television, 730 hours of radio, 20 records, 61 hours of talking on the telephone, and 3 books for knowing (Wurman 1989, 203). This deluge represents information, but not necessarily knowledge worth remembering.

As social studies educators we face major challenges. Let us offer thoughtful rationales and models for deciding what knowledge is crucial for students to study in depth—rationales and designs such as those offered by the Curriculum Task Force of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools and certainly those developed as NCSS scope and sequence models. Let us remind our students and the public that the social studies provide knowledge that is absolutely indispensable to individual, national, and international survival. Let us encourage the public to join us in insisting that our children receive regular and adequate instructional time to gain this imperative citizen knowledge: for what we have little time to teach, our students will undoubtedly have little concern to learn. Let us emphasize lively, engaging, classroom instruction so that students will think about and discuss the meaning of citizen knowledge enough to understand it, to care about it, to cherish it, and to lend their citizen voice to preserve and improve it. Let us help our youth and their parents recognize that the "office of citizen" is the one and only office that every single student will assume and that every adult holds. Let us make students and public aware that the "office of citizen" bonds us—connects us—across gender, race, creed, ethnicity, generations, and centuries. Let us insist, then, that every child, in every grade, in every school be given an equal opportunity to engage every day in the social studies; for we know that the social studies are a major gateway within the curriculum to informed, confident, worthy citizen voice.

## Citizen Vision

Next, let us consider citizen vision. Informed and confident citizen voice is important. Yet, citizen voice must go beyond the immediacy of "what is" to articulate powerful visions as well—visions of the past of "what was meant to be," and visions of the future of "what should be." The question here is, how can the social studies contribute to the building of "citizen vision?"

Well over 2,000 years ago Athenians created the earliest vision of strong, participating citizens. Hear the voice of the ancient orator, Pericles, as he provides for us and our students a vision from the past—a vivid vision of the importance of the citizen in Athenian society:

> Our [Athenian] constitution . . . favors the many instead of the few; this is why Athens is called a democracy . . . for unlike any other nation, [we regard] him who takes no part in these [civic] duties not as unambitious but as useless.[1]

The vision proceeds from Pericles, Aristotle, the Roman Republic, and Rousseau to an elevated definition of citizen as "the highest moral and political role for human beings, a distinctive role based on justice, freedom, equality and participation" (Butts 1988, 103).

The early founders of our own democratic republic built on this vision of citizen when they framed the Declaration of Independence to emphasize the inalienable rights of the people and the legitimacy of government based entirely on the consent of the governed. The framers of the United States Constitution proceeded to create a "We the people" republic—where citizens are expected to exert civic virtue for the common good, the general welfare.

At a patriotic celebration in Chicago in 1858 over eighty years after the American experiment began with the Declaration of Independence, Abraham Lincoln brought us to an expanded vision of the meaning of citizenship when he said:

> We hold this annual celebration [of the Declaration of Independence] to remind ourselves of all the good done in this process of time, of how it was done and who did it, and how we are historically connected with it, and we go from these meetings in a better humor with ourselves—we feel more attached the one to the other, and more firmly bound to the country we inhabit . . . We have besides the men descended by blood from our ancestors among us perhaps half of our people who are not descendants at all of these [historic ancestors] . . . When they look through that old Declaration of Independence they find that those old men say that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal"; and then they feel that that moral sentiment taught in that [historic] day [is evidence of] their [own relationship] to those [ancestors] . . . and that they have a right to claim [relationship] as though they were blood of the blood, and flesh of the flesh of the men who wrote that Declaration, and so they are. . . . (Basler 1974)

What expansion in citizen vision is required by the span of years from Lincoln's day to our own? As we encounter the last decade of the twentieth century it is clear that we are participants in an age in which political, economic, social, and cultural visions are daily refocused by the dramatic events of our time. Dramatic events indeed! Lincoln could not possibly have foreseen how increasingly important, yet how difficult, it would become in our own day and time to balance the beauty of pluralism within our multi-cultural society with the need to continue to build a unity and core of citizen purpose. How could he have predicted the heartbreaking statistic that by 1989 one in four children in the United States would live in poverty and that children would become the largest segment of impoverished Americans?[2] How could he have anticipated the shocking reality that the school community and caring teachers would become the most stable and dependable part of life for increasing numbers of children? Is there any way he could have guessed that there would be excuses for the national debt, insider trading, the Department of Housing and Urban Development scandal, the near-demise of the savings and loans; but that the schools would be a focus for blame even as increasing percentages of students from all walks of life have begun to take the SAT and steadily increase their SAT scores over the last decade?[3] Could he possibly have imagined that the governors would meet in 1989 with the President in an education summit and forget to utter one word in behalf of the most fundamental need of our society or any society—that of teaching civic knowledge and nurturing civic virtue among the young—for it is, after all, the young who will create the future that we will all share?

Could anyone have predicted that by the year 2025 (a little over 100 years from Lincoln's own time but just one short generation from ours) that our population will be about 50 percent Anglo, 36 percent Hispanic, and 12 percent Black? Nor could he have imagined that by the year 2030 those citizens 65 years of age and older will grow by 11 percent (from the current 12 percent of the population to 23 percent) whereas those under 35 years of age will shrink by 11 percent (from the present 55 percent to 44 percent).[4]

Certainly, no one could have foreseen how radically our old assumptions would need rethinking in light of examples of daily cataclysmic global change within the span of a few short years:

- the USSR under Gorbachev's initiatives—*glasnost* and *perestroika* and the restiveness of ethnics espousing more militant nationalism than the Soviet Union has seen for decades;
- hundreds of thousands of determined people all over the world applying pressure on closed societies to allow fresh and free beginnings;

- a Berlin Wall built to hold back, so go around—no, take it down piece by piece and go through;
- conflicts tempered yet unsettled in such areas as Afghanistan and Angola;
- the puzzle of Central America—what to make of Nicaragua, Panama;
- the dilemma of debtor nations—those new to the debtor realm and nations labeled third-world that have never known any status other than debtor;
- a Pakistani mob that attacks an American installation in rage over a British book by an Indian writer, Salman Rushdie;
- Western Europe racing toward 1992 to become the world's largest economic entity;[5]
- a majority of developing nations with lower per capita food consumption and higher poverty rates today than 20 years ago and the gap between rich and poor nations widening steadily;[6]
- Poland and solidarity; South Africa and apartheid; Israel and Palestine, Lebanon; The People's Republic of China, bloody Beijing, and Tiananmen Square;
- a tiny, finite sphere, the Earth and a planetary "Grand Tour" by *Voyager 2*.

The old assumptions simply will not serve. We are invited—we are forced—by the events of our time to rethink what the human connectedness of which Lincoln spoke so long ago means today. Brief examples illustrate an emerging citizen vision that highlights what citizen interdependence and connectedness mean in this day and time:

### Culture, Human Interaction, and Connectedness

The first example takes us back a few short years, before his untimely death, when U Thant was Secretary General of the United Nations and gave the world a view of simplicity, honesty, and kindness as citizen values that are much more apt than greed, force, and power to lead to cooperation among human beings on the earth. U Thant's personal comments (Mueller 1978, 121) on his own daily work provide for us a new, fresh vision—a rethinking of some "taken-for-granted" assumptions related to culture, to human interaction, and to connectedness:

> I wake up in the morning as a Buddhist and a Burmese and meditate for at least a short while . . . to set my work, actions, and thoughts into the proper perspective. When I return home in the evening, I become again a Burmese and a Buddhist: I exchange my Western clothes for the . . . skirt worn by men in Burma and reintegrate [into] my family, which has retained fully [throughout

> the day] the Burmese and Buddhist ways of life. But when I enter my office [as Secretary General] in Manhattan, you will understand that I must forget [temporarily] that I am a Burmese and a Buddhist. One of my duties [there] is to receive many people—diplomats, political men, scientists, writers, journalists, and my UN colleagues. Most of my visitors have something specific to say to me, I must open myself to them. I must empty myself of myself . . . .

U Thant paints a citizen-vision of a listener who intends to hear, a human who intends to help. He paints a citizen vision of connectedness, individual-to-individual—a vision that he sees as the foundation upon which human progress rests.

## The Idea of Community

What of the citizen vision that Meg Greenfield provides as she reflects on the actions of George Bush in a *Newsweek* essay? Meg Greenfield, usually on the opposite end of opinion's spectrum from George Bush, has this to say:

> Two days after his drug speech, a photograph of President Bush appeared practically everywhere in the press. He was holding in his arms, quite lovingly, the abandoned black infant of a drug-addicted mother. This set off a certain amount of grumbling by the cynics about image-making and the politics of the photo opportunity . . . . I say: forget the photo op part for the moment and concentrate on the photo. This was exactly the right picture for a president to have appeared in that day and goes directly to the hardest part of his or any government's effort to mobilize a successful public assault on drugs in this country. That is not the problem of "getting the community involved," as the reigning banality would have it, but rather the prior problem of establishing the idea of community at all—the idea that George Bush and that baby and that baby's missing mother are all part of the same "we."[7]

## Inescapable Connectedness

Jessica Tuchman Mathews, environmental scientist, projects into the future a similar vision of inescapable connectedness after discussing issues related to the greenhouse effect, climate changes, the death of trees in European and Appalachian forests, ozone holes, environmental refugees who leave their homes because they cannot grow food, tropical deforestation, energy depletion, and the impurity of water. Mathews (1989, 291-304) states:

> We're going to need a new sense of shared destiny, that we're in this together. We, the family of nations, are going to have to develop somehow some shared sense . . . that we work together, or we're all going to suffer. . . . We have to get a new mental picture of what a constructive policy is, and the tricky part is going to be getting it before we have a crisis.

Where is it that students have the opportunity to learn of and think about "I," "you," "we," "they," and "all of us together" in historic, current and future terms if it is not the social studies? Social studies education serves as a major gateway to traditional visions of what our republic's founders hoped our nation would become and what they intended for citizens of a democratic republic to do. As social studies educators let us help students find answers to some basic citizen questions—What is the legacy from the past? What are my historic roots, my nation's beliefs, my values? Whose history must I learn?—the history of western civilization and its contribution to our own national history? Yes. The history of world civilizations—western and non-western? Yes. The history of majorities? The history of minorities? Yes. Let us also challenge our students to move through that historic gateway and use their understanding of the past to see the citizen's individual, social, economic, and political roles in visions that project the future of the nation and the world—a future that bursts the outer limits of all that any of us have ever thought or known. Let us help students catch the vision of "citizen" as public office—an office that transcends the narrow confines of individual desire and moves to the levels of stewardship and community service. Crucial? Absolutely. Let us, then, remind our students and the public that social studies education is a major gateway to citizen vision.

## Citizen Vitality

Finally, let us center our attention on citizen vitality. Citizen voice enables us to articulate "what is" and citizen vision equips us with a view of "what should be." However, it is the mismatch between "what is" and "should be" that opens the gateway of opportunity for each student to become a participating citizen—in fact, to exercise citizen vitality. The social studies take as a central charge to provide students with the voice and vision that serve to undergird and inspire new possibilities for citizen contribution; citizen vitality. Dare we do anything less than challenge the students in our social studies classes to learn, to reflect, to plan, and then to see the direct relationship of that social studies learning to meaningful citizen action? Dare we do less than challenge them to channel their energies into vital citizen roles based on the realization of their relatedness, their connectedness, to the entire human community and their belief that it is both possible and worthy to contribute in the spirit of civic virtue to the common good?

In every generation we find those who intend to make a positive difference and give their energies to that end. The following biography illustrates just such a person who:

- lost his job,
- was defeated for the legislature,
- failed in private business,
- suffered a nervous disorder,
- was defeated for local office,
- was defeated for nomination to Congress,
- was elected later to Congress but lost renomination,
- ran for land officer and lost,
- was defeated for the Senate,
- was defeated for the nomination to the office of Vice-President,
- was defeated again for the Senate, but,
- was elected President of the United States.

Once elected to the Presidency, Lincoln used his citizen voice, vision, and vitality to establish firmly in the minds of his own and subsequent generations that ours is a government "of, by and for the people."

We can identify people like Lincoln, and many others who are less noted, in every generation including our own—individuals who take the "office of citizen" seriously and intend to make a positive difference. These citizens do not negate the responsibility of government to contribute to the common good; but neither do they sit idly by in helpless despair lamenting the world's unsolved problems. Brief examples from this generation serve to make the point.

You know, of course, of the growing problem of deforestation, but have you heard of the citizens in the San Francisco Bay area who decided to install meters in the zoo so that visitors can deposit coins to buy and preserve millions of acres of tropical rainforest? If the over 100 million people who visit zoos in the United States each year deposit as little as 50 cents per person in the meters, it is estimated that 4.8 million acres of tropical forest can be purchased each year by these "citizen-ecologists."[8]

You know, certainly, of the constant threat posed by international tensions; but do you know of the retired couple, the Hersons, who with over 400 other people, joined in the Soviet-American Peace Walks that take participants through large portions of the Soviet Union and the United States? The walks, designed to build bridges of friendship through first-hand citizen-to-citizen contacts, are endorsed by both the Soviet and United States governments. The Hersons say that they see this as a way to be personally involved in building mutual understanding as "citizen-diplomats."[9]

You know, unfortunately, of examples of basic inequities in our own society; but have you heard of the Superintendent of Schools, James Vasquez, whose law suit went to the Texas Supreme Court? The court found, in its 9 to 0 ruling, that school financing in Texas which permits a disparity as great as $17,000 in spending per student from the wealthiest to the poorest school district is unconstitutional. Superintendent Vasquez and the members of the court are pointing the way to positive change for tens of thousands of children in the nation's second largest school system in their role as "citizen-advocates."[10]

You know, clearly, of the challenges faced by increasing numbers of immigrants to the United States; but do you know of the young man who was the valedictorian of the graduating class of the United States Air Force Academy? Having arrived in the United States in 1975, Hoang Nhu Tran, a Vietnamese boat boy, learned English, and in the span of twelve short years completed his undergraduate education, became the first Vietnamese to be named a Rhodes scholar, and has been accepted by the Harvard Medical School. Hoang Nhu Tran promises, "I will do something great. I will give back many times more than what was allowed me. America will be proud of me. The Vietnamese will be proud of me. Most of all, my father and family will be proud of me. I will serve and help all mankind." He intends to make a positive difference as a "citizen-healer."[11]

One last example of a very young child from my own school district who has a vivid idea of what it means to exercise citizen vitality. I know of a third grade girl who, given the assignment to conduct an interview, decided to interview the mayor of her small suburban community. Armed with a set of prepared questions, the child met and interviewed the mayor. But after the final prepared question had been discussed, the young inquirer surprised everyone by announcing that she had just one more question she would like to ask. She began, "Near my house there is a dangerous corner where the deer sometimes cross. One deer was killed recently and I am worried that people might be hurt in accidents there, too. Couldn't there be a sign to warn motorists to watch out for the deer?" The mayor promised to bring the suggestion before the city council. Today, at that corner, a sign reads, Watch For Deer. And so it seems that strong participatory citizenship is possible even at an early age—an eight-year-old child in third grade has learned how to use her citizen voice to share her vision of what "should be" and exercise the citizen vitality it takes to bring about positive change as a very young "citizen-in-process."

These examples serve to make the point because each of you know your own examples as well—examples of individuals young and old, or groups of people working together in hundreds of projects to get beyond themselves to be about the business of citizenship. These examples illustrate the applications of knowledge, skills, and dispositions central to the social studies—applications of the social studies to meet head-on real human and planetary needs.

Think back in time to the moment that you decided to become a social studies educator. What was your reason? I believe for many of you, it was because you recognize the social studies as a vital link between the past given to us and the future that citizens create. But as social studies educators we serve our students best when we pause, reflect, and ask ourselves a few pointed questions. Have we selected with utmost care what is the most important content to teach in-depth? Why are we teaching it, and what do we hope in the long term our teaching will accomplish? Social studies professionals, "citizen-educators" involved in the nation's most important work, look beyond the present to see the future reflected in the eyes of their students and ask themselves regularly:

- What new perspectives will my students gain about the promise of the future and how will lessons from *history* inform that perspective?
- What new arrangements in government will my students devise to strengthen the vigor of citizen participation in our democratic republic and how will lessons from *political science* contribute?
- What new value will my students place on their own abilities to make a positive contribution and how will the study of *psychology* help them identify empowering personal qualities?
- What new insights will my students realize about society's groups and how will the study of concepts from *sociology* lead to more enhancing group interactions?
- What new structures will my students create in business to see that the distribution of goods and services becomes equitable for all people and how will the study of economics inspire their creations?
- What new appreciation will my students develop for races and creeds other than their own and how will *ethnic* and *international studies* enhance that appreciation?
- What new insights will my students gain from the study of other cultures and how will *anthropology* inform those insights?
- What new standards will my students set for meeting global human needs and how will the study of *geography* and *international relations* lead to greater justice for all?
- What new integrations of content and approach will the social studies facilitate to meet human needs in continuing as well as reconfigured forms into the next century?

The social studies promote positive citizenship in the successor generation: we can't afford to leave it to chance, for that would be like endorsing government of half the people, by half the people, for half the people. That scenario is not in any sense what a democratic republic is, what it ought to be, nor what, in fact, it must be if democracy is to survive and flourish into the twenty-first century. As Benjamin Barber has said in his book, *Strong Democracy* (1984, xvi), "The last best hope now, as two-hundred years ago, is that America can be America: truly self-governing and democratic, thus truly free." However, as scholar Amy Gutmann (1987, 288-289) aptly points out, ". . . our concern for democratic education lies at the core of our commitment to democracy."

We stand at a gateway—at the threshold to a new year, a new decade, a new century. I challenge us as an organization and each of us as individuals who take social studies education seriously to seize this "gateway moment." Let us review the legacies of the past, examine the present, and prepare our students well to become citizens who will create a vision of a significantly improved future. Let us remember always that each of us, each of our students, each person in each generation must make the journey toward informed, active, and positive citizenship. Let us proclaim that positive citizenship does not just happen and that it is only what we value as a nation that our children will come to cherish. Let us believe and help our students to believe that connectedness, community, and the common good are stronger than cynicism. Let us as NCSS members, participating professionals, social studies educators, give all the knowledge, skills, and heart we possess to make clear the power of the social studies to prepare our students to hold with honor the "office of citizen"—to become contributing citizens who can and will make a positive difference in their own spheres of influence—their families, their communities, their nation, and the world. Do this we must, for we know that the social studies are indeed the gateway to citizen voice, vision, and vitality. We also know full well what lies just on the other side of the gateway—the uncertainty, the exhilaration, and the promise of citizenship in the twenty-first century.

## Notes

1. Thucydides, "Pericles in Praise of Athens," in *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1881).

2. ABC Television, "Good Morning America," October 1989.

3. Marcia Wollfrum, "Scores Rate American Education a Winner," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 24 November 1989.

4. Robert P. Hey, "Changing Fact(s) or Face of U.S. Population," *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 February 1989, 8.

5. Pat Holt, "Changing Tide in World Affairs." *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 March 1989.

6. Stephenie Coontz, "'The Family' Has Many Definitions," *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 February 1989, 18.

7. Meg Greenfield, "Far Beyond Indifference," *Newsweek*, 18 September 1989, 88.

8. "Feed a Meter, Save a Forest," *Newsweek*, 12 December 1988, 88.

9. Russel W. Baker, "Peace Walkers Fight Ignorance," *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 September 1989, 14.

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11. Bernard Gavzer, "I Will Do Something Great," *Parade Magazine*, 12 June 1988, 16.

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# 1990

# UNKEPT PROMISES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES: SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

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This presidential address was presented on November 18, 1990 to the 70th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Anaheim, California. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 55 (February 1991): 138-141. ERIC Number: EJ 427 734.

# 1990

## Unkept Promises and New Opportunities: Social Studies Education and the New World Order

*C. Frederick Risinger*

Two sets of feelings—quite disparate sets of feelings—fill me right now. The first set includes a sense of honor and appreciation to be able to represent 26,000 members of an association that I joined nearly thirty years ago as a second-year classroom teacher in Illinois. Since that time, NCSS, its associated and affiliated groups, such as the Social Studies Supervisors Association and the Indiana Council, its projects, and many of you and other members not in this room have been an inextricable part of my life. If you ask Pegi or my children, they will tell you that the word "inextricable"—meaning "incapable of being disentangled or loosed" and "from which one cannot extricate oneself" was well-chosen. Only a few of you know this, but it was at the Presidential Address in New York City in 1970—Shirley Engle's address—that I decided I wanted to be an NCSS president some day. Shirley, your ideas concerning the role of decision making and social criticism in the social studies curriculum and citizenship education profoundly affected my own teaching and my leadership of a small, innovative social studies department in a suburban Chicago high school. To review the outstanding, comprehensive array of sessions, workshops, vital issues sessions and other components of this year's Annual Meeting program makes me proud of our efforts and the services and leadership we provide our members.

The second cluster of feelings is quite different, although related to the first. It can briefly be summarized as sheer panic. (If I have ever been more filled with trepidation about an event or as terrified as I have been for the past several days, I certainly cannot remember it.) I have worked and planned for twenty years to be able to stand here . . . and now I have to justify it. Fran Haley had a wonderful speech opening she used a couple of years ago when asked to "bring greetings" from NCSS headquarters at the myriad number of state and regional meetings she attends. She would say something like "I knew when I took this job that I would have to give speeches, but I did not think I would have to say anything of substance."

I know that feeling. As I am sure everyone in the distinguished group on the front row did as I—begin to think (and worry) about this moment nearly three years ago when I received the phone call saying I had been elected vice president. And this issue—what would I say?—has been on my mind—never far below the surface ever since.

One of the things I did as I tried to decide what to talk about is review past presidential addresses. Several emphasized specific content—such as the importance of global education, or the multicultural foundations of the United States, or the interrelationship of history and the social sciences. Many focused on the purpose of and rationale for social studies education—most often stressing education for effective, participatory citizenship in a democratic nation. Every address I reviewed was impressive. Each contributed to a continuing, evolving dialogue about social studies and NCSS.

But unlike many former presidents, I have not had a content-based goal that has been the center of my efforts. For a decade and a half, I have stressed the importance of world history, decried its diminished status during the 1970s and 1980s, and spoken and written about reestablishing it as a compulsory course in the curriculum. I even included it as one of two goals in my position statement when I ran for vice president. Like many times in my life, I was lucky. Policymakers and educators from William Bennett to Roger Smith at General Motors to John Gardner and Ernest Boyer were writing and speaking about the need for more world history. From a low point in the 1970s when only an estimated 16 percent of all high school graduates had a world history course, the figures have moved up to between 25 and 30 percent. The California State University system now requires secondary world history for admission and many school systems throughout the nation are reinstating world history in the curriculum, in many cases as a graduation requirement. Like I said, I was lucky. I was on that bandwagon when they hitched up some mighty big horses.

So, if I could not identify a specific content area to use as the focus of this talk, what would it be? What did I really believe in related to social studies education? I was driving home from a workshop in central Indiana not long ago—one of those terrible events where the assistant superintendent had decided that the social studies department was fossilized and needed a shaking up. It was a half-day program on Friday—the students were dismissed for the day. It was a disaster. The morning general speaker—brought in primarily for entertainment purposes—strung together a set of platitudes connected by jokes that can charitably be described as sexist, racist, and embarrassing. Later, in my session, the dozen or so social studies teachers kept looking at their watches, since they would be able to leave at noon. My workshop consisted of an activity that analyzed recent research on effective educational strategies and another activity that modeled (I hoped) those strategies. It involved cooperative groups, social history, and the use of original documents. Frankly, I think it was great. . . . I have used it throughout the country and it always worked well—until that day. The crowning moment came when, at the conclusion of the activity, one fellow tossed the activity sheets into a nearby wastebasket and said for all to hear, "You can't teach this stuff to a bunch of rocks." That led to a general discussion of why *their* students could not be taught using the techniques that emerge—so craftily—from my workshop . . . and why their methods, basically involving "fill-in-the-blank" study guides and lots of lecture and rote memorization, were the only way to teach social studies. Driving home, I knew one of the things I would talk about today. The news on the radio described both presidents Bush and Gorbachev talking about a "New World Order," a strange Orwellian phrase, which, when coupled with my depression about the day's events led to the title of this talk.

But before I get to that topic, please allow me to take a detour. It will take us to our destination, but along a path that I think is necessary. For as long as I have been an active NCSS member—and from reviewing literature like the excellent volume, *Voices of Social Education, 1937-1987*, there has been an ongoing debate about the goals and rationale for social studies and what should be taught at specific grade levels in the precollege curriculum—scope and sequence is the term most frequently used in recent years to describe this debate. I am not going to recount the tortuous history of this complex set of issues; those of you that are familiar with it do not need it and those of you that are not—well, there is just not enough time. But, in the past five or so years, there has been a major rift in our organization about this topic. The controversy disappoints and even saddens me, not because some people disagree with others—that is a healthy, even essential aspect of any professional organization—but it saddens me because it has led to accusations that the NCSS leadership has restricted debate, has been dominated by "traditionalists or historians," and has used unfair practices over the past several years in its efforts to develop a set of multiple option curriculum patterns.

Or, on the other hand, there are those who claim that NCSS is dominated by starry-eyed and impractical radicals who would throw away all substance in favor of what Diane Ravitch has termed "soupy sociology." Adherents of this view call for a social studies curriculum dominated by history, with some attention to geography. Contemporary issues of social and economic inequity, bigotry, and environmental decay should be discussed only in historical perspective; as if the solutions to these problems can be found—like reading tea leaves—in the decisions and actions of our forbears.

I realize that the following characterization is perhaps too simplistic, but it represents one way to view two schools of thought within the field. On one hand, there are those—some from within, and many from outside the organization—who argue that history—with some assistance from geography and the other social sciences—should be the primary focus of what we do in the schools. To these people, the term "social studies" itself is suspect and NCSS is referred to (as in the recent *Newsweek* article) as an "obstacle to greater concentration on history." On the other hand, there are many within NCSS—several of whom have preceded me in this office—who contend that decision making, or social criticism, or education for participatory citizenship is the heart (and soul) of what we do. To them, history, geography, political science, and economics merely provide the grist for the decision-making mill.

Since about 1984, NCSS, through its Curriculum Committee, the House of Delegates, the Board of Directors, and special ad hoc committees, has struggled to identify and support various scope and sequence models. During this time, the first proposed model was seen as too traditional by many. A call for other models was made and six proposals—that differed in both approach and format—were received. A House of Delegates resolution calling on the Board to select one was narrowly defeated and was amended to call for the selection of three "endorsed" models—the multiple options approach. A special ad hoc committee, laboring with limited resources and time, developed criteria and recommended three of the models. The authors of those that were not selected complained, with some justification, that they should have known about the criteria in advance (but, of course, they did not exist in advance) and should have had an opportunity to revise their models in light of the new criteria. In the meantime, the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools began its work. While NCSS played a major role in the work of the Commission, some support and many of its leading voices came from the American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians. Its report, *Charting A Course: Social Studies for the 21st Century,* was released just a year ago. Hailed by some, it has also been criticized—primarily by the "decision-making" advocates as too traditional—even backward looking—and NCSS has been accused as "succumbing to pressures" by the historians. Charges have been made that NCSS is promoting the Commission's report as the only "endorsed" curriculum to the exclusion of others. And, in the midst of all this, the *History/Social Science Framework for California Public Schools* (1988) and the report from the Bradley Commission on History in the Schools were released—both reports receiving a great deal of attention and drawing both praise and criticism.

I was a member of the Board of Directors and an officer during much of this time. In retrospect, I can understand the feelings of those authors of the unselected scope and sequence models who argue that developing the criteria after the fact might have favored some models over others. I also agree that, in recent months, NCSS has advertised and encouraged sales of the National Commission report, perhaps causing some to believe that it is the only "officially-approved" curriculum document from this organization. However, the recent issue of *Social Education* (1990), including several articles critical of the Commission report, and the development of the new NCSS curriculum packet, which contains several curriculum documents including the report and the three endorsed scope and sequence models, illustrate a commitment to dialogue and multiple options.

Some have also charged that open debate about the Commission report at last year's and this year's Annual Meeting has been curtailed. As I recall, there were several dissenting voices in the "reaction" meeting the day after the report was presented and the only proposal dealing with that issue that the Program Committee received this year—a panel including supporters and critics of *Charting a Course*—was accepted and appeared as a special session last evening. The debate about scope and sequence in the social studies curriculum will continue—as it rightfully should, in Annual Meetings, in our publications, and in state and local committees throughout the nation. It is official policy and actual practice of NCSS to encourage such committees to examine a variety of curriculum models and to adopt, adapt, and develop a curriculum based on the NCSS curriculum models and adopt, adapt, and develop a curriculum based on the NCSS curriculum guidelines as well as local needs and requirements.

While the debate continues, I think it is useful for those of us who are caught up in it to consider realistically the effects of this intellectual discourse and the resulting curriculum documents on social studies teachers and classes in the United States. Those of you who work daily in schools probably know the answer—not very much—but I have two illustrations of this point. First, Jim Leming (1989) from Southern Illinois University has finally said what many of us have suspected and quite a few of us knew: namely that elementary and secondary teachers are not very concerned with most of the theories, rationale statements, and curriculum patterns of those he calls the theorists. His article in the October 1989 issue of *Social Education* and Gerald Marker's followup letter this past March tell us about the "two cultures" that simply do not communicate with each other. In a chapter of the forthcoming *AERA Research Handbook*, Marker and Howard Mehlinger maintain that teachers pay little attention to a rationale for teaching social studies—it is something you employ after you decide what you want to teach. (Marker and Mehlinger also state that "social studies as a curriculum field may have been saved by Ronald Reagan." I'll let you think about that for awhile . . . you will have to get a copy of the book to find out why they say that and how he did it.) Stephen Thornton (1990, 54) of Columbia Teachers College cites three research studies that suggest that commonly-accepted goals of social studies education such as critical thinking and understanding the American political system are seldom apparent in instruction and seldom found in what students learn. Thornton concludes that discussion by saying, "In short, officially endorsed goals and practice are frequently worlds apart."

My second illustration is more personal. In 1977, as part of a National Science Foundation project, I taught a class at Indiana University on new trends in social studies for department heads. One of my students, Alan, an extremely bright young man, left social studies the following year to become a principal of a private school. Last fall, he contacted me because he was finishing a master's degree and could graduate if I would "update" that coursework. I gave him the National Commission report, *Charting a Course*, the California Framework, the Bradley Commission Report (1988), the issue of *Social Education* (1989) containing all six proposed scope and sequence models, and copies of three letters critical of the National Commission report that had been sent to Mary McFarland after last year's Annual Meeting. I asked Alan to read all the documents, write a paper identifying areas of consensus and disagreement, and write a separate "response" to the letters. When we met a month later, Alan was excited. He told me that reading the documents made him want to teach social studies again. The main thrust of his paper was that there were far more areas of agreement than conflict between the various curriculum models. His written response to the three critical letters focused on content since he was not familiar with the process. In it, he pointed out (and quoted from the *Charting a Course* report) showing that it did call for the development of skills and ethical attitudes for effective, active citizenship, comparative study of political systems, and responsibility for civic participation—the very attributes the letter writers claimed were missing. In summary, Alan found broad agreement among the various documents and enthusiastically obtained his own copies for the social studies department in his school. He wanted the teachers to develop their own program using all of them—precisely the intent of the multiple options approach.

What Alan found is what I think most of us would find—that there is general agreement among us social studies educators—more than we think. The curriculum models criticized by those who favor the decision-making, social criticism approach as being too heavily weighted toward content, particularly history—frequently stress the goals of participatory citizenship and values such as respect for the rights of minorities. And, those scope and sequence models that emphasize reflective inquiry and active citizenship require a foundation of content from history, geography, and the social sciences. However, instead of building upon our areas of agreement, many of us—particularly in that group that Jim Leming calls the theorists—have focused attention on our differences—to the detriment of NCSS and social studies education. For too long, social studies has been, in the words of one writer—"in disarray," in the words of another—"a field adrift." Social studies has become the Rodney Dangerfield of the American curriculum—"we just don't get any respect."

Yet, while we debate, discuss, and disagree, social studies teachers in the classroom—that other culture that Jim Leming identifies—go right on teaching. More importantly, social studies keeps right on changing. The social studies curriculum—the real curriculum—what actually is being taught—is different today than thirty-three years ago, when I was in high school or six years ago, when my son was in high school. But the changes did not come about from the deliberations of the NCSS Curriculum Committee or from the pages of *Social Education*. They are a result of a changing nation and world that require a changed social studies curriculum. For, whether we like it or not, the public schools of any nation must change to meet societal needs. And social studies, more than any other area of the curriculum, is more susceptible and should be more responsive to these agreed-upon societal imperatives. It is not up to NCSS—or any group within this organization—to determine what is in the best interests of this nation or world. Of course, we can and should participate in that public debate. However, it is our professional responsibility to take these commonly-accepted societal goals and, using such fields as history, geography, economics, and political science, give our students some of the knowledge and skills—and values—that will make their lives more meaningful, more productive, and—as a result—more enjoyable—in every sense of that term.

Some of you will challenge my belief that social studies should be responsive to national goals and societal imperatives, claiming that we will merely become tools of whomever holds the reins of power . . . that we will be subject to whims and fads (as the recent *Newsweek* article claimed) . . . or that social studies will become merely an instrument of indoctrination. Those of you that agree with that assertion have little faith in the American democratic system of government . . . or the American people. There are many times when I, too, may despair about political decisions, or the results of an election, or the banality and venality shown by leaders in government, business, and even education. But, just when I do, some reform effort changes the system; some rascal is turned out; some compromise solution is reached; and some influential woman or man shows incomparable courage and wisdom. Jimmy Carter, in an address to the Indian Parliament said, "The experience of democracy is like the experience of life itself—always changing, infinite in its variety, sometimes turbulent and all the more valuable for having been tested by adversity." For me—as an American . . . as a social studies educator . . . I simply cannot lose faith in our imperfect system of government. For all of us—as social studies educators—we must accept the solemn responsibility—and, what I believe is the prized honor of helping our nation—and our world—work to achieve agreed-upon societal imperatives.

This has happened in the recent history of the social studies. Two examples are global (or international) education and teaching about religion in social studies. For years, social studies educators such as Jim Becker, Betty Reardon, Lee Anderson, and Andy Smith spoke eloquently about the need for global education, for visualizing the world as a global system. And while this concept received support within our profession, its effect on textbooks and what actually was taught in the classroom was limited. Only in the past five to seven years, when Presidents Reagan and Bush, opinion leaders such as Ernest Boyer and Bill Moyers, economists such as Milton Friedman and Murry Wiedenbaum, and corporate executives such as Roger Smith started using terms such as "global economy" and "global village" has global education become firmly rooted in state and local curricula and major textbooks.

Teaching *about* religion in social studies is another one of those "trends" that is about to be institutionalized within the curriculum. And, while I appreciate the long years of pioneering hard work by such social studies professionals as Lee Smith, Wes Bodin, Charles Haynes, and Bob Dilzer (and the entire Religion in the Schools Committee), it took reports and pressure from groups as diverse as People for the American Way and Don Wildmon's organization for decency based in Tupelo, Mississippi—

and public acknowledgment and acceptance—for curriculum developers, textbook publishers and classroom teachers to begin this process of institutionalization.

There are negative examples of this concept of societal imperatives driving the curriculum. In my opinion, a prime candidate is "death education." Several years ago, there were a half dozen or so projects on "death and dying" and several model sets of curriculum materials designed to be integrated throughout the social studies curriculum. But, it just did not catch on—with teachers, with administrators, with the kids (when you are twelve or thirteen—any age—who wants to study about your own death?), and especially with parents and the general public. The "death" of death education is an excellent example of a legitimate idea that simply did not receive the public support necessary to move from a "fad" to a "trend" to an accepted part of the social studies curriculum.

If you accept these ideas, we can begin to identify societal goals that should be a focus of the social studies curriculum. They are not fads that will replace history or geography or government—instead, history, geography, economics, and government will be used to prepare future citizens to meet these challenges. (You know, historians sometimes think they are discovering the truth, but we know that history is written by each generation . . . and by the victors. If Leninist Socialism had really worked, the economic and social history in the year 2000 would read much different than it is going to read.)

What are some of these societal needs that will become—should already be—part of social studies now and in the near future? Without going into detail, I can suggest several. Certainly, environmental issues will be a dominant concern for all the world's people—in the next 50 or 100 years, perhaps for centuries. Then, there is the difficult dilemma of balancing the multicultural composition of the United States and the need for national cohesion—pluralistic integration—the real meaning of *e pluribus unum*—"from many, one." This goal—this value—should be explicitly stated as part of every state and local curriculum guide. (The California *Framework* [1988], by the way, does an outstanding job of making this a centerpiece of its K-12 curriculum.) Teacher education courses—not just those in social studies—but all courses should openly and proudly proclaim this as a societal imperative and a national educational goal.

Other values should be explicitly part of the social studies curriculum. The nation is clearly calling for ethical behavior in business and in government. It is *not* indoctrination to teach openly about the value of human life, honesty, integrity, the fundamental equality of all women and men, the rights of minorities and minority opinion in all societies, the wrongness of torture, or the rightness of a nation governed by laws made by the freely-elected representatives of the people. To those who might question whether education, and specifically social studies education should openly deal with such values in our classrooms, consider this anonymous quote from *The International Worker,* the newsletter of the IWW (yes, they still exist):

> I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no person should witness. Gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot and killed by high school and college graduates. So, I'm suspicious of education. My request is: help your students to be human. Your efforts must not produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, or educated Eichmanns. Reading and writing and spelling and history and arithmetic are only important if they serve to make our students human.

There are other national goals—societal imperatives—that we could discuss. One last example: We need to make participation in public affairs a national priority—starting with voting. Marker and Mehlinger (1991), in their forthcoming work, refer to citizenship as "that totem to which all social studies [educators] pay homage." Yet, the percentage of eighteen to twenty-four-year-old voters has declined from 41.6 percent (nearly half) in 1972 to only 28.9 percent in 1988. Yet, every single state and local curriculum guide, every social studies theorist, and you and I tell the American public that we are in the business of teaching kids to be "effective participatory citizens." That's one of those "unkept promises" I referred to in the title. I believe that we will soon see a national consensus for some type of mandatory or quasi-mandatory community service course at the high school, perhaps like the current requirement in New York State. When William Buckley, Ted Kennedy, and Sam Nunn agree on this issue, can consensus be far behind? Social studies should be prepared and eager to offer content-based community service programs—perhaps tied to civics or government courses.

Well, my lengthy detour is over and we have almost reached our destination: the end of this talk . . . and the Presidential Reception and then the dance. I invite all of you to be there. But, I have one more topic to cover . . . I will try to do it quickly, but it is one of the other things that I do really believe in and as long as I have you here, I am going to talk about it. We have talked about the content of the curriculum all evening . . . and for as long as I can remember . . . and even longer. While we should not stop, we need to be realistic. A good social studies program is not made out of paper. The best state or local curriculum guide in the nation—including all the right (whatever that is) content—is worthless in the hands of an ineffective, uninspired, burned-out teacher. And folks, while I hate to proclaim this at a meeting of teachers . . . with many noneducators in attendance, we have got some ineffective, uninspired, burned-out—downright poor teachers out there. I would like to think that social studies teachers are somehow different, but you and I know that we are not. As a matter of fact, I am afraid that we might have more than our share of those, like the man in central Indiana who feels his students are a "bunch of rocks" and that "fill-in-the-blank" study guides are an appropriate way to teach the drama, excitement, and significance of U.S. history.

For far too long, we have struggled and battled about papers—and the words on them. We must turn part—a substantial part, in my opinion—of our attention to *how* we teach, as well as what we teach. Again, the very best curriculum guide—one written by angels—is useless in the hands of an ineffective, dispirited, incompetent teacher. There is a substantial body of research on effective teaching—some of it done by social studies educators like Fred Newman, Beverly Armento, and others. We know that cooperative groups work well. We know that teaching in-depth is more effective than trying to cover every topic in the textbook. We know that the more students write, the more they learn and the longer they retain it. Much of what we know applies to other curriculum areas and we should work in concert with our fellow organizations in English/Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, and other fields on the absolutely essential goal of improving teaching, and as a result, learning. If we do not—and if we do not do it soon—I believe that another societal imperative—that of improving this nation's education—will lead to the end of one of the greatest social experiments of human history—the American public educational system. (But that is another speech.) I have great hopes that the new Task Force on Teaching and Learning, cochaired by President-elect Margit McGuire from Washington state and Jim Marran from Illinois, will begin to focus our attention on this crucial issue and provide some of the incentive for the improvement of instruction in our classrooms. Of course, they can only identify some goals and point out some road signs along the way—you, in your school, your state council, and your relationships with other educators, must help make progress toward this goal.

I had three goals for this speech. First, I wanted to acknowledge the difficult and sometimes divisive efforts to address the topic of curriculum scope and sequence . . . and to encourage all of us—university-theorists and classroom teachers—to turn our sights toward the future—armed with multiple curriculum options—and to put aside our differences—which to outside observers appear insignificant and even unseemly. Jeff Passe, from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte asked a crucial question of vice presidential candidates Denny Schillings and Dick Kraft at today's House of Delegates. Referring to the divisions over scope and sequence, Jeff asked "What will you do to bring us together?" I don't think Denny or Dick can do it by themselves. We have to be willing to help them.

Second, I wanted to state my view and urge you to consider that the real source of curriculum content must reside in the citizenry of a nation—perhaps even the world. Societal imperatives are both identifiable and capable of being tested—in the free marketplace of a multiple option social studies curriculum. The ones that pass the test will become an integral part of social studies in the future.

Finally, I wanted to encourage all of us to redirect our attention and resources to that all-important, too often-neglected half (maybe more than half) of teaching and learning—the act of instruction. It is what really determines the effectiveness of a social studies program—that elusive combination of art and skill—two simple words: "good teaching."

Again, I must emphasize what an honor it is to serve as NCSS president—certainly the highlight of my professional career, perhaps my life—up to this point. I tried my best to come up with a good closing statement but could not find one more appropriate than one I have used a couple of times in the past. I hope those of you that have heard this story will accept it as the last resort of a man trying to finish a speech before the airplane left. As some of you know (and many of you with good reason may disbelieve), I, at one time, planned to be a minister. In my church, on the Kentucky-Illinois border, we would have annual revival meetings, a week-long series of services in which a minister—selected for his ability to rouse the congregation and revive individual faith—would preach every evening. When I was about fifteen, we had a revival service featuring a minister from Kentucky. He was enthusiastic and fiery, if a little short on correct grammar. At the conclusion of the week-long services, he asked us to stand and bow our heads for the benediction. He said, "Lord, we ain't what we could be. We ain't what we oughtta be. We ain't what we're gonna be. But, thank you Lord . . . we ain't what we wuz." So folks, if you ain't what you wuz thirty-five minutes ago, I have achieved my goals. Thanks for listening.

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# 1991

## WHOSE VOICES WILL BE HEARD? CREATING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

*Margit E. McGuire*

Margit E. McGuire was a professor and chair of teacher education at Seattle University in Seattle, Washington.

This presidential address was presented on November 24, 1991 to the 71st Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Washington, D.C. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 56 (February 1992): 129-132. ERIC Number: EJ 450 746.

# 1991

## Whose Voices Will Be Heard? Creating a Vision for the Future

*Margit E. McGuire*

It is an honor to address you as president of the National Council for the Social Studies and share with you my vision of the future of social studies education. I wish I was here to announce that we have reached a turning point—that social studies education is seen as central to the curriculum and critically important to the development of all young people in our democratic society; that school restructuring has addressed the needs of our youth, regardless of race, class, or ethnic heritage; that teachers have the power to make meaningful choices about curriculum and instruction. Sadly, in fact frighteningly, that is not the case.

### Systemic Societal Problems

As educators, you are all aware of the enormous problems we face. They are not isolated problems—they stem from the systemic problems facing our society. Those problems include poverty, dysfunctional families, inadequate school funding, and a host of other maladies.

Let me share with you a few excerpts from a book by Jonathan Kozol called *Savage Inequalities*. Mr. Kozol illustrates our plight:

> On the southern edge of East St. Louis, tiny shacklike houses stand along a lightless street. Immediately behind these houses are the giant buildings of Monsanto, Big River Zinc, Cerro Copper, the American Bottoms Sewage Plant and Trade Waste Incineration—one of the large hazardous waste incineration companies in the United States.
>
> The entire city lies downwind of this. When the plant gives off emissions that are viewed as toxic, an alarm goes off. People who have breathed the smoke are given a cash payment of $400 in exchange for a release from liability. . . .

> The chemical plants do not pay taxes here. They have created small incorporated towns which are self-governed and exempt therefore from supervision by health agencies in East St. Louis. Aluminum Ore created a separate town called Alorton. Monsanto, Cerro Copper and Big River Zinc are all in Sauget. National Stock Yards has its own incorporated town as well. Basically there's no one living in some of these so-called towns. Alorton is a sizeable town. Sauget, on the other hand, isn't much more than a legal fiction. It provides tax shelter and immunity from jurisdiction of authorities in East St. Louis. (13)

Mr. Kozol goes on to tell about schools in which raw sewage backs up and floods school buildings. The schools are in such disrepair they are hazardous.

Mr. Kozol's conversations with young children living in East St. Louis are sobering. Let me share a portion of that conversation.

> The children regale me with a chilling story as we stand beside the marsh. Smokey says his sister was raped and murdered and then dumped behind his school. Other children add more details: Smokey's sister was 11 years old. She was beaten with a brick until she died. The murder was committed by a man who knew her mother.
>
> The narrative begins when, without warning, Smokey says, "My sister has got killed. She was my best friend," Serena says.
>
> "They had beat her in the head and raped her," Smokey says.
>
> "She was hollering out loud," says Little Sister.
>
> I ask them when it happened. Smokey says, "Last year." Serena then corrects him and she says, "Last week."
>
> "It scared me because I had to cry," says Little Sister.
>
> "The police arrested one man but they didn't catch the other," Smokey says.
>
> Serena says, "He was some kin to her."
>
> But Smokey objects, "He weren't no kin to me. He was my momma's friend."
>
> "Her face was busted," Little Sister says.
>
> Serena describes this sequence of events: "They told her go behind the school. They'll give her a quarter if she do. Then they knock her down and told her not to tell what they had did."
>
> I ask, "Why did they kill her?"
>
> "They was scared that she would tell," Serena says.
>
> "One is in jail," says Smokey, "They cain't find the other."
>
> "Instead of raping little bitty children, they should find themselves a wife," says Little Sister.
>
> "I hope," Serena says, "her spirit will come back and get that man."
>
> "And kill that man," says Little Sister.
>
> "Give her another chance to live," Serena says.
>
> "My teacher came to the funeral," says Smokey.
>
> "When a little child dies, my momma say a star go straight to Heaven," says Serena.
>
> "My grandma was murdered," Mickey says out of the blue.

> "Somebody shot two bullets in her head."
> I ask him, "Is she really dead?"
> "She dead all right," says Mickey. "She was layin' there, just dead."
> "I love my friends," Serena says. "I don't care if they no kin to me, I care for them. I hope his mother have another baby. Name her for my friend that's dead." (13-14)

*This* is what we're up against. As I stand here in 1991 and imagine what the future holds in the year 2010, I see our country in chaos and on the brink of anarchy. I see a two-class society—the "haves" control 90 percent of the wealth, and the "have-nots" are left with 10 percent. Unemployment is at an all-time high—people are disillusioned and without hope. Life is a terrifying game of survival. Only the "have-nots" attend public school. The "haves" send their children to private schools sequestered safely from the harsh realities of society. Some progressive educators in these private schools send their students into the community to work with the underprivileged, but they lack understanding of the realities of life for the economically deprived. They are, at best, patronizing.

## A Downward Momentum

Beyond 2010, the outlook is even bleaker.

What has happened to this nation that once prided itself on equality and justice and a commitment to the common school? What happened to this nation that was once viewed as a haven for the dispossessed seeking democratic freedoms? The Statue of Liberty proudly proclaims, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Unfortunately, immigrants coming to the United States today still see the democratic freedoms and the American dream but often *become* the tired, the poor, and join the huddled masses. They join the others that are locked into a cycle of poverty and blamed for their own impoverishment.

I believe 1991 may *be* the turning point, but not the one we seek. We are gathering momentum on a downward slide.

I see fundamental changes for the worse in our nation and in our schools. A barometer of these changes is the language of our time, which shapes our perceptions of the world.

For example, *revisionist*. Many in the media love to use this term whenever an attempt is made to clarify the historical record through the use of new documents or new perspectives on old documents. If the new information does not uphold their long held understanding of an event, it's labeled "revisionist." Did we somehow lead these journalists to believe that there was just one story to be told about a historical event? If so, we did them a great disservice. In these times, "revisionists" have come to be seen as undermining the mainstream culture.

Consider the Columbus Quincentenary. Many educators and other concerned citizens hope to acknowledge this date by looking beyond the myth of Columbus and finding the deeper meanings of the explorer's encounter with the Americas. This analysis of the effect of Columbus's explorations is frequently labeled "revisionist history"—and it's dismissed because people refuse to consider new ideas that might destroy the comforting myths we've embraced for at least one hundred years.

A term whose meaning has changed almost overnight is *multicultural education*. As long ago as 1976, the National Council for the Social Studies affirmed through position statements the basic principles of a democratic society in its multiethnic guidelines. Our newly revised guidelines consistently reaffirm these principles. They state, in part:

> The multicultural curriculum should promote values, attitudes, and behaviors which support ethnic pluralism as well as build and support the nation-state and the nation's shared national culture. *E pluribus unum* should be the goal of the schools and the nation. The multicultural curriculum should help students develop their decision-making abilities, social participation skills, and sense of political efficacy as necessary bases for effective citizenship in a pluralistic democratic nation.

And yet, just this summer *Time* magazine featured a cover story in which it recast the goals of multicultural education as undermining the American way and exalting racial and ethnic pride at the expense of social cohesion. Clearly, *Time* chose to ignore the fundamental goals set forth by our council and others and create its own definition of multicultural education.

And, finally, the term *political correctness*. The press is having a great time with this one! Cover stories by *Newsweek*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *New Republic*, and *New York* have focused on race, multiculturalism, and the politically correct movement on college campuses. The *New York Times* has given extensive coverage to this topic.

Political correctness has been defined as left-wing academics' intolerance and exclusion of traditional western values. A conservative view is that political correctness is designed to restrict free speech and free-flowing intellectual inquiry.

The other view is that curriculum, whether at the university or K-12 sector, must foster goals of multicultural education that promote cross-cultural understanding and inclusion. This juxtaposition of political correctness and multicultural education has led to a giant leap in misunderstanding of the goals of multicultural education and I call into question the motives represented by this kind of reporting.

## Setting Standards for Social Studies

Another sign of the fundamental change in America is the media's powerful role in shaping the views of Americans in schooling. The media has focused on the public's growing dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of American schools, and in turn President Bush has created *America 2000*. It is a political ploy to create the impression that this administration is concerned about young Americans and the nation's schools.

In my view, the goals of *America 2000* are misplaced and do not address the magnitude of problems faced by students in East St. Louis or elsewhere, where poverty plays a significant role in the lives of young people. At the federal level clearly there is no vision to make America a better place for *all* Americans. There is no vision that speaks to our society as part of a global village. The signs are clear that we are on a slippery slope and the opportunity to maintain or build a common school with a commitment to equity and justice for all is fading away.

*If* we allow things to remain at the status quo, *if* we take no action, *if* we do not take seriously these national movements—this is the vision I fear for America. Now, I ask you, what vision do we have as social studies educators? My vision is that through social studies we can do our part to restore a sense of hope in the American dream for all our children. Now, how will we attain our vision?

As citizens, we must have a strong voice for justice in our society. We can expend great amounts of energy on national goals and tests and overlook the issues of poverty, unemployment, dysfunctional families, and lack of health care and nutrition. We must not let national education initiatives overshadow the problems of society as a whole.

As educators, we must become ambassadors for social studies, even though for most of us that was never in our job descriptions as teachers. We must teach the importance of social studies and, whether we like it or not, we must engage in a process of negotiation and communication with policymakers. If our voice is not heard, the story will not be compelling, and social studies curricula will be further diminished.

We must influence the *America 2000* goals to address social studies, not just history and geography. Although *America 2000* may fade away as politicians come and go, we must see that our goals are incorporated into whatever educational plan this country follows.

I am concerned about the testing agenda. My fear is that we will have a cultural literacy test that negates our pluralistic society. We all know what a national test can do in shaping the curriculum. I understand this is a political agenda. I understand that policymakers need accountability. As an educator I understand the need to assess learning. Clearly, goals need to be established before testing can be instituted. It is vital that we slow down the testing agenda. The establishment of a national test undermines the emerging reforms in school-based management and shared decision making. A national test lessens the role of parents, educators, and communities in local control of schools. For the field of social studies, testing is particularly problematic. How does one test civic efficacy, conceptual development, or the acquisition of democratic values? We simply do not currently have the tools to test this kind of learning as part of a national testing system.

Assessment is fundamental in the teaching/learning process. Assessment must begin with clearly defined goals and the needs of the learner. New models for testing must be developed to address the areas that are central to social studies. The National Council for the Social Studies must play a role in the development of those assessment tools. We must shape this national testing agenda.

We must begin the process of setting standards for the social studies. We must put aside our differences within our organization about the best scope and sequence, and work together to create standards that permeate all the social sciences.

I believe that in setting standards for the content of social studies, it is imperative that we begin with the needs of the learner. We must break out of the mold of beginning with the content of the disciplines. That is why a document being developed by the National Council for the Social Studies on teaching and learning becomes critically important to this endeavor, but more about that in a moment.

## Civic Efficacy and "Connections"

The content of social studies needs to center around civic efficacy and connections. Civic efficacy is critical to living in a democratic society and has been promoted and written about at length in our field. Connections, on the other hand, receive less attention. What I am referring to is how we interact with others in our families, our communities, and beyond. Our increased diversity points to the complexity of making connections with those who differ from us. Understanding these connections must be a primary goal of the social studies. Young people who come from dysfunctional families or families in crisis must feel connected to others. We must recognize that in large schools students often become transparent and isolated. If we are to make learning meaningful, we must find connections for these students. I am suggesting that our vision for the social studies truly address the needs of young people today who live in a complex, changing, and global society. We must create standards that address these concepts that should be central to the curriculum.

We must put more effort into effective instruction. We have begun that task by establishing a committee to focus on teaching and learning. The committee has delineated five key themes.

First, social studies is powerful when it is integrative. The very term *social studies* implies integration. As we make connections with reading, writing, science, and mathematics, we build meaning and purpose in social studies education. Topics of study demand to be integrative, thereby promoting social and civic decision making. It is pedagogically sound and critical to student learning.

Second, social studies is powerful when it is meaningful. It is essential that social studies learnings connect with students' lives outside of the classroom setting and serve as a basis for lifelong learning that is necessary in a democratic society. Students must have an awareness of purpose for learning and believe in its value.

Third, social studies is powerful when it is challenging. The content must be suited to learners' developmental levels and cultural backgrounds. Higher-order thinking is necessary to increase understanding and appreciation of our world. Controversial issues must be addressed, especially if we are to have an informed citizenry. The habit of critically thinking about challenging or controversial issues is necessary for living in the twenty-first century.

Fourth, social studies is powerful when it is active. Reading the textbook and completing worksheets as a primary instructional strategy is deadly, but too often this is the scene in social studies classrooms. No wonder students' least-liked subject is social studies! Central to the curriculum is the understanding of the relationships we have to other individuals, groups, and nations. It is the study of people and how they go about their daily lives. It is about the vision we have for making the world a better place. How can this *not* be active? Teachers must have a repertoire of teaching strategies to engage students actively.

Fifth, social studies is powerful when it is value-based. Powerful teaching considers the ethical dimensions of topics. It addresses controversial issues and provides an arena for reflective development and application of prosocial values. The values expressed in our Constitution and Bill of Rights form the basis for teaching in our social studies classrooms. These values are essential for social cohesion in a pluralistic society.

## Reaffirming Core Values

My vision of the future is thus. As a nation we must pull together rather than become polarized. We have to care about each other and be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to arrest the divisions that grow larger every day. We must work toward understanding and accepting each other and our respective diversities and cultures. Historically, we have been enriched by our diversity and we must affirm and celebrate that. We must be courageous and not back down from the beliefs we hold to make this world a better place. We must make a renewed effort in values education. The values we promote in our classrooms become even more critical as we move toward the twenty-first century.

Core values that we hold as teachers—such as promoting self-esteem, mutual respect, and cooperative activity—must be reaffirmed. Social studies must be centered on human relationships. We must be strong voices for these values. They are central to our nation and its struggle for equity and justice.

We must be a strong voice for the goals of multicultural education. We must clearly articulate those goals and challenge those who would recast those goals into the political correctness agenda.

We must enter into the debate on curriculum standards. At the core of that debate must be the needs of the learner in a democratic and pluralistic society. The debate must also take into account sound learning theory and not be guided solely by a discipline-based mind-set.

We must renew our attention to those in our classrooms that have been labeled "at risk." We cannot write off these learners, no matter how difficult the task may be. This will demand of us risk-taking, courage, and commitment. These young people and those described so poignantly by Jonathan Kozol must believe in and be part of the American dream.

Each of us had a vision of what we could be as educators. Now we must have a vision of what our nation can be through education, through our actions as social studies teachers, and through our voices as teachers and citizens. We can help our young people better understand and cope with life, even under the most dire of circumstances. We can be the voice that creates the vision of a better world. I join you in working toward that endeavor, thereby ensuring that the world can be a better place and that belief exists for all of us.

## Reference

Kozol, Jonathan. *Savage Inequalities.* New York: Crown Publishers, 1991. Excerpts from *Savage Inequalities* by Jonathan Kozol. Copyright © 1991 by Jonathan Kozol. Reprinted by permission of Crown Publishers, Inc.

# 1992

# THE CONTEXT OF CIVIC COMPETENCE AND EDUCATION FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER COLUMBUS

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**This presidential address was presented on November 22, 1992 to the 72nd Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Detroit, Michigan. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 57 (April/May 1993): 160-164. ERIC Number: EJ 469 693.**

# 1992

## The Context of Civic Competence and Education Five Hundred Years after Columbus

*Charlotte C. Anderson*

The Contemporary Relevance of 1492 is the theme of this North American Social Studies Conference. Fourteen ninety-two is relevant to social studies educators in 1992 because the context for contemporary civic competence and civic education originated five hundred years ago when Columbus landed in this hemisphere. It is this context that I will examine.

The Columbian Quincentenary position statement of National Council for the Social Studies (1991), endorsed by twenty-nine major education and other professional organizations in the United States, describes the contemporary relevance of 1492 as follows:

> One of the most significant and visible features of the contemporary United States is its multiethnic and culturally pluralistic character. Scholars describe the United States as one of history's first universal or world nations—its people are a microcosm of humanity with biological, cultural, and social ties to all other parts of the earth. The origin of these critical features of our demographic and our civic life lies in the initial encounters and migrations of people and cultures of the Americas, Europe, and Africa.
>
> Another significant feature of the United States is the fact that the nation and its citizens are an integral part of a global society created by forces that began to unfold in 1492.

The concepts of civic competence and civic education relate directly to the definition of *social studies* the NCSS Board of Directors will bring to the house of delegates at this meeting.[1] This definition reads in part:

> Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. . . . The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for

> the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

Both the Quincentenary statement and the definition identify the context for civic competence as one of cultural diversity and global interdependence. Further, the definition relates civic competence to the "ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good in a democratic society." The NCSS definition manifests a growing conviction within the social studies community that we must affirm here and now our commitment to education for civic competence and, in so affirming, make certain that we understand as explicitly as possible the nature of civic education.

The task we embrace is critical to achieving the democratic principles of equity, freedom, and justice. In addressing this task, we must sustain and strengthen democratic institutions in the historical context of a world that is increasingly multicultural and interdependent and recognize and respond to the often subtle alterations in the civic fabric that radiate from the complex relationship between diversity and interdependence.

We must discard familiar and therefore comfortable images of reality and embrace unfamiliar and disorienting ones. These new images, although they may be threatening and disconcerting to those of us firmly rooted in the mid-twentieth century, are nonetheless congruent with emerging realities of the world our children will experience. If what I say is true, we social studies educators face a task that may shake the very foundations on which most of us have built our personal and professional lives.

As one group of educators states the challenge (*Hunger Teach Net* 1992, 1):

> [S]tudents coming of age in the 1990's will not be cold warriors. Their battles will be more complex, their allegiances more conflicted. They must confront the domestic crucible of gender, race and class, the international imbroglios of North and South, and the challenge to the nation-state as the fundamental organizing principle for the global community.

As social studies professionals, we must ask ourselves: "Do we former cold warriors have the intellectual vision and the political courage to meet the educational needs of this new generation?"

### Cultural Diversity and Global Interdependence

Cultural diversity and global interdependence have become readily acknowledged dimensions of the human experience. They are, in fact, so readily acknowledged that they have become clichés. This is unfortunate because *global interdependence* and *cultural diversity* are terms that point to profound features of the world that has emerged in the last five hundred years. Diversity and interdependence are profound because they deeply affect all dimensions of our civic lives.

Moreover, we can anticipate that in the twenty-first century both interdependence and cultural diversity will increase because the two phenomena mutually reinforce one another. As interdependence increases so does cultural diversity; conversely, as cultural diversity increases so does global interdependence. For example, global communication, transportation, and weapons technology expedite and compel the involvement of distant nation-states in both civil and international conflicts. Refugees from these conflicts seek and obtain asylum in distant nations furthering cultural diversity within receiving societies.[2]

As people move around the globe, for whatever reasons, new immigrants remain attuned and connected in various ways to their countries of origin. The children of these immigrants represent an increasing proportion of the children in our classrooms, for whose civic competence we are responsible. Today's immigrants use modern communication and transportation technology to maintain contact with their native cultures. These informal, personal channels are augmented by more formal ones. For instance, multinational corporations recruit skilled immigrants to serve as "cultural liaisons."

Local immigrant service agencies and cultural organizations facilitate adaptation to a new society, but also sustain the culture of immigrant groups and connect them to their former homes. A handbook on the world affairs field in Chicago lists more than thirty agencies for immigrants and refugees and forty-two foreign-language newspapers published in eighteen different languages (Tatro 1991).

*The growth of interdependence and cultural diversity affects and changes many dimensions of our civic lives.* For example, we have traditionally associated international affairs with national governments. Today, national governments no longer monopolize foreign affairs. Municipalities, states, and provinces increasingly pursue relationships with nations and subnational governments around the world as well as with foreign-based multinational corporations and other international non-governmental institutions. New subnational and cross-national regional blocs or pacts are being formed to strengthen positions in the global economy. One example that is an amalgam of subnational and cross-national regional cooperation is the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, which includes the states of Alaska, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana, and the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. Given these and myriad other kinds of state-level global involvement, state governments including those of Kentucky, California, Florida, and Hawaii have formed offices of international relations to handle their "foreign relations" (Rose 1991; Larkin 1992).[3]

Cities are also enmeshed in foreign affairs. At least ten U.S. cities have reportedly opened offices of international activities—"in essence municipal state departments" (Shuman 1992, 158). Cities around the globe have established direct and on-going relationships with other cities—the Sister Cities movement exemplifies this. Cities take political stands in relationship to foreign governments and international affairs. The American Committee on Africa reported that by 1986 fifty-four cities had divested their South African holdings (Alger 1990, 510). In March 1989, mayors of seventy-two cities in thirty-one countries had officially joined the World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Intercity Solidarity. Upon reflection, intercity solidarity—especially solidarity that cuts across thirty-one countries—may well put a city on a collision course with the policies of its national government.

As the global system penetrates subnational as well as national polities, our civic roles as citizens of municipalities, states or provinces, and nations are no longer as neatly separated and distinguished as textbooks suggest (Alger 1990; Shuman 1986-87).

*In the context of global interdependence and cultural diversity, enduring civic issues take new form as new civic issues emerge.* It is not only state and municipal government officials, but private citizens, who are increasingly involved in international affairs. Of course, citizens are involved indirectly through the decisions of local, state, and national governments. Because transportation and communication technology keeps immigrants linked to their home countries, however, more of them are involved in both the civic life of the country from which they emigrated and that of their new country of residence. We thus confront the question of what citizenship means when a citizen is a participant in more than one national polity.[4]

The expansion of transnational corporations raises a host of civic issues. The economic interests of multinational corporations often conflict with the political interests of city, state, and national governments. Multinationals, therefore, heighten the growing tensions between our roles as consumers, workers, and investors in a global economy and our roles as citizens in particular cities, states, and nations.[5]

The growing involvement of the United States in the global economy is closely related to the growing gap between the haves and the have-nots in this country. This economic disparity began to emerge in the early 1970s and rapidly accelerated in the 1980s. For example, between 1977 and 1989 the after-tax income of the most affluent 1 percent of families in the United States increased by 60 percent.

According to the *New York Times* (Nasar 1992),

> the average pretax income of families in the top percent swelled to $560,000 from $315,000, for a 77 percent gain in a dozen years, again in constant dollars. At the same time, the typical American family—smack in the middle, or at the median, of the income distribution—saw its income edge up only 4 percent, to $36,000. And the bottom 40 percent of families, had actual declines in income.

An increasing number of people are homeless.

Economic inequality combined with the international drug trade are infecting cities with escalating violence and our urban children are on the front lines. Two voices reveal to us some of the desperation of our children. Kareem attends Thomas Jefferson High School in Brooklyn where a 16- and a 17-year-old were gunned down by a 15-year-old on February 26, 1992. Kareem wears a bullet-proof vest on Fridays and Saturdays.

Asked why he doesn't carry a gun, Kareem responds, "Cause you'll get arrested for carrying a gun, not for wearing a bullet-proof vest." Explaining why he didn't carry a knife, he asks, "What am I going to do, stab the bullet?" Kareem's friend Tosha adds, "It might seem like a dream, but if I had all the money, I would take [it] and build a big magnet that would attract all these guns and [I'd] destroy them." (Shipp, Lee, and Tabor 1992).

The interrelationship among education, poverty, and violence is a central civic issue. How can we expect children to learn when they are sick, hungry, and afraid?

I will conclude this inventory with another civic issue. Let me pose it as a question: Are we capable of escaping our Western/male-centered perspectives of democracy so that we can distinguish the substance of democratic principles from their forms—so that we can accept legitimate culturally different, alternative means to achieving democratic ends? Teachers who are meeting the educational challenges of multicultural classrooms can contribute significantly to meeting this civic challenge.

Our society, our world, must have citizens who can sort out all such critical civic issues, who can make honest, humane, well-founded decisions firmly rooted in democratic principles, who recognize the potential global ramifications of local decisions, and who can communicate and act effectively across cultures. Such citizens would internalize what Dewey calls "democratic social intelligence." They would be capable of following an argument, grasping the point of view of another, expanding the boundaries of understanding, and debating alternative purposes and solutions. We social studies educators, like Dewey, recognize that such social intelligence also includes the commitment and competence to engage in civic action.

If educating for democratic citizenship within culturally diverse nations in a global society is the major educational challenge of the twenty-first century—as I believe it is—social studies as the curricular area committed to developing such civic competence is essential to national education reform.

In bringing social studies to the forefront, we must address some important education issues. Here are a few.

### Education for Democratic Citizenship

The schools of the United States were established first and foremost to provide education for democratic citizenship. This historic mission is now endangered by unenlightened efforts to shape education primarily in order to achieve a secure position in the global marketplace. *America 2000* (U.S. Department of Education 1991, 59), the blueprint for national education reform developed by the nation's governors and President George Bush, concludes that "as a nation we must have an educated work force, second to none, in order to succeed in an increasingly competitive world economy."

In the current education reform movement, far more emphasis is placed on creating an educated work force than on cultivating a broadly educated citizenry. *America 2000* appears to believe that our schools can produce an educated work force capable of securing a solid bottom line with no explicit attention to civic education. In fact, however, a work force made up of citizens capable of recognizing and responding to critical social issues is essential for economic security.

To make economic competitiveness the central mission of education in any society is shortsighted and, by intent or neglect, can prove destructive to democracy. Economic strength without citizens capable of understanding the public good corrodes the social infrastructure. Even a nation with a strong economy risks increasing violence and disintegration of community when gross inequities in resource distribution sanction greed, sexism, classism, and racism. I do not intend to denigrate economic concerns or to impugn the value of economic security. On the contrary, I insist that real economic security depends on education for democracy.

### Competition and Choice

Consistent with a narrow economic agenda, the corporate model is presently heralded as the salvation of education. Public schools are bad, it is argued, because unlike businesses they do not have to compete to attract customers.

The way to improve education, this argument goes, is to make public schools compete with private schools in a marketplace for students. Choice is the answer. Just as I can choose to shop at K-Mart or Saks Fifth Avenue, I can also choose the school my children will attend. I am not the first to point out that few have the luxury of such a choice. Saks is an option available only to the affluent. Furthermore, education is far more complex and vital to the continued survival of society than anything sold at Saks or K-Mart.

We charter public schools—we the people—above all to foster democratic stewardship and help our young people discover how to achieve community within our diversity. Private schools, on the other hand, serve a multitude of private interests. They offer options that a democracy by definition upholds. Private schools, however, are not necessarily held accountable for the development of democratic citizenship. Public schools, under their public charter, are always held so accountable. When public officials forget their responsibility to the future of democracy and fail to support public schools, then democratic societies are in danger of further fragmentation along the social fault lines of class, ethnicity, and religion.

## Multicultural Education

Shifting demographics in the United States have underlined issues of cultural diversity in education. In 1991, the state of New York undertook one of the most widely publicized and controversial efforts to introduce multicultural issues into the curriculum. The state's Social Studies Syllabus Review Committee's report, issued in June 1991, garnered headlines and prompted much debate. Serving on that committee was the historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Dissenting from the report, Schlesinger (1991) claimed: "A basic question is involved: Should public education seek to make our young boys and girls contributors to a common American culture? Or should it strengthen and perpetuate separate ethnic and racial subcultures?"

This perspective on the "basic question" distorts the problem. Schlesinger constructs a false dichotomy—without sensitivity to "separate ethnic and racial subcultures," we certainly cannot build and sustain a center that holds. Furthermore, the internal diversity of the United States enhances our capacity to relate effectively to the culturally diverse world beyond our borders. Diversity, when seen in this light, is undeniably value-added.[6]

In my judgment, the *Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education* of the National Council for the Social Studies provide a far superior perspective on the relationship between civic unity and cultural diversity. These newly revised guidelines, published in the September 1992 *Social Education*, are available through the council office. I urge you to obtain a copy, read it, and apply the guidelines in your work, in your schools.

## National Standards

Part of the national education reform involves the establishment of standards for student achievement. Because the national standards development effort grew out of the national goals, a distinct possibility arose that standards might be restricted to only two areas of the social studies—history and geography. Through an aggressive effort to broaden standards, standards are now also being developed in civics and government and in social studies. NCSS is cooperating in the development of standards in each of the three discipline areas—history, geography, and civics and government—and is undertaking the development of integrative social studies standards.

The announcement of the social studies standards initiative describes the council's effort in these terms (NCSS 1992):

> As a complex field of study with major responsibilities in the education of citizens, the social studies need to speak with a unifying voice. Independent efforts to define standards by subject-matter disciplines are important but insufficient to provide the unifying focus required of broad-based citizenship education. By articulating unifying standards in the social studies, education of citizens will be better served because disciplinary knowledge will be developed and used for the common purpose of helping students to function effectively as citizens in the complex, interdependent world of the twenty-first century.

## Social Studies Standards

This meeting will provide a forum on each of these four sets of standards related to social studies. Most of these efforts are in the early stages of development. I urge you to attend these hearings or to seek other opportunities to shape these important standards. Throughout the coming spring, state and regional council meetings will afford additional opportunities to respond to the developing standards.

We all undertake such reviews with our own perspectives and agendas in mind. Anyone convinced of the centrality of civic competence to the mission of social studies should try to determine whether the projected standards address this mission. We must also determine whether the standards complement and reinforce one another, ensuring that students are versed in other equally valuable areas of the social studies.

Anyone convinced of the synergistic effects of cultural diversity and global interdependence on our children's lives will seek to ensure that these standards treat the U.S. experience not as a monolithic, isolated cultural experience but, rather, as an integral part of a larger interconnected whole of the diverse worldwide human experience.

## A New Civic Culture

So far, I've talked about the civic context of education and the educational context of civic competence, and I highlighted some of the tasks we face in each context. Let me call your attention to the fact that implicit in all of these tasks is an overarching issue with both civic and educational dimensions.

In the past, our concepts of both civic competence and civic education rested on the assumption that our societies had roughly coterminous political, economic, and cultural boundaries. This is no longer the case. There is one global economy encompassing almost two hundred national polities; dividing and linking these nations are thousands of sub-national and transnational cultures. The challenge now is to fashion a civic culture that accommodates these realities. In short, we must create a new civic culture. This challenge is not historically unique. The ancient Greeks, for example, faced a similar challenge when they realized that the traditional civic culture of neither tribe nor empire fit the demands of city-states.

Who will be called upon to create our new civic culture? The process is already underway and we can contribute to it. It will, however, be our children and our children's children who must bear most of the responsibility. Are we equipping them for the task? Are we providing them with an understanding of the two essential ingredients of a new civic culture—global interdependence and cultural diversity? Are we giving them the vision to see new realities? The capacity to listen to new voices? The courage to venture into new or incompletely charted conceptual and institutional territory?

## Political Courage and Altruism

Earlier I asserted that we social studies educators find ourselves in circumstances that may shake the very foundations on which most of us have built our personal and professional lives.

Some of us will retire before we are forced to recognize the obsolescence of our professional preparation. Some of us will find ourselves increasingly uncomfortable and ineffective as more and more of our tricks of the trade fail to do the trick. Reschooling and retooling will be the order of the day. As we live through these disconcerting years of change ahead, we must adopt two essential tenets of professional ethics: political courage and altruism.

Attacks on social studies as a field necessitate politically courageous responses. Political courage is the willingness to speak truth to power. When curriculum terrorists vindictively call social studies a "dismal swamp," when they claim the discipline has failed to the extent that social studies educators should get out of the way and submit to the de-integration of their field—political courage must inform our response. When special interests seek to limit the topics addressed in the classroom and to circumscribe the perspectives from which these issues may be examined, when censors threaten academic freedom—political courage must inform our response.

Social studies professionals recognize that the survival of democratic principles depends on the right to engage in critical inquiry. Character assassination and disinformation notwithstanding, social studies is a sound, viable field engaging highly competent professionals who successfully meet critical educational needs in schools throughout our nations and the world. Defending such convictions warrants political courage.

There are times, however, when altruism is the appropriate stance. If political courage is speaking truth to power, altruism is subordinating power to truth. Altruism is the willing sacrifice of private gain and narrow self-interests to the public good.

When the social studies field seeks to improve its approaches from within, altruism must inform any deliberative process leading to such improvement. When honest analysis of a curricular problem reveals that one's area of competence is insufficient to a given task, altruism should prevent the dogged insistence on one's position. Although such professional self-interest may produce a short-term sense of power, if it compromises education it cannot be justified. Stepping aside in such instances may involve considerable personal and professional cost. Altruism demands that we continually seek alternative approaches and develop new competencies within familiar approaches. Such diligent self-reflection allows the social studies professional to adopt long-range perspectives that effectively serve the general good. We must insist upon such altruism as a vital component of our competence as social studies professionals.

Certain circumstances demand closing ranks and presenting a unified front. Other circumstances require internal debate and self-critique. The problem comes in not distinguishing the two.

Finally, the social studies profession must reflect the cultural and ethnic plurality of societies. Such a diverse professional constituency will more effectively address critical decisions by providing, in turn, diverse leadership to local, state, and national councils. Furthermore, we must expand our opportunities to develop relationships with social studies professionals throughout the world.

Ours is a time that demands concerted action to extend and redefine continually the rich field of social studies. It is no time for retrenchment and splintering of the disciplines. Those who would disassemble our integrative field are dangerously out of step with the synthesizing, cooperative efforts that occur wherever we produce knowledge, make meaning, and effectively address civic problems.

## Notes

1. The NCSS House of Delegates ratified the definition on November 23, 1992.

2. I use the terms *nation-state, nation,* and *national* here and throughout to signify those governmental units parallel to such entities as the United States, Canada, Turkey, and South Africa. Professor Chadwick Alger, Mershon Center, Ohio State University, in particular, has sensitized me to the miscommunication and distortions inherent in these terms. *State* would be the correct term, which would not suggest, as *nation-state* does here, that all states are composed of a single nation. Alger says: "If we are to think insightfully about the problems that multination states are now encountering, we must begin using the term *nation-state* correctly" (private communication). Correct use would be to reserve *nation-state* only for political entities that are single-nation states and to speak of others as *multination states*—or, to label all as *states*. The latter practice, however, causes confusion when the states of the United States are referenced in the same context—as I do many times later in this piece. This misfit between linguistic tools and political realities is yet another example of the discomforting process of change that global interdependence and cultural diversity has wrought.

3. These state offices are the Legislative Office of International Relations in Kentucky, the Florida International Affairs Commission, the California Senate Office of Protocol and International Relations, and the Office of International Relations in Hawaii.

4. A growing number of scholars and other political observers are noting this phenomenon. A few of the complexities of the situation are addressed in, for example, Stanley Foundation, *The Growing Impact of Ethnic and Geographic Diversity on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Muscatine, Iowa: Stanley Foundation, 1990); Stanley Foundation, *Global Changes and Domestic Transformations: New Possibilities for American Foreign Policy* (Muscatine, Iowa: Stanley Foundation, 1992); Benjamin R. Barber, "Jihad vs. McWorld," *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1992): 53-65; Alger 1990. The September 12, 1990, *Chronicle of Higher Education* carried an article by Chris Raymond entitled "Global Migration Will Have Widespread Impact on Society, Scholars Say." After sketching the research of several social scientists, the author closes with this observation by Professor Martin Heisler, political scientist from the University of Maryland: "People in political science are increasingly voicing the notion that concepts of sovereignty, citizenship, and community have to be revamped."

5. In preparing this manuscript for publication, I came across Paul Kennedy's op-ed piece in the *New York Times* ("True Leadership for the Next Millennium," 3 January 1993), which discusses the critical links between domestic affairs and international developments.

6. This latter point is made convincingly in the sixth chapter, "Making the World Nation," of Joel Kotkin and Yoriko Kishimoto, *The Third Century: America's Resurgence in the Asian Era* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1988).

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# 1993

## TEACHING THE HUMAN CONDITION THROUGH THE SOCIAL STUDIES

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**This presidential address was presented on November 19, 1993 to the 73rd Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Nashville, Tennessee. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 58 (April/May 1994): 197-199. ERIC Number: EJ 487 184.**

# 1993

## Teaching the Human Condition through the Social Studies

*Denny Schillings*

Among the membership of the National Council for Social Studies, we have great thinkers, curriculum innovators, experts in the many disciplines that comprise social studies, and scholarly researchers who have been actively articulating the essence of social studies for a long time. It would be presumptuous of me to attempt to alter or elaborate on work by those who have spent a lifetime thinking about their fields. Rather, I want to direct my remarks to the thing that I do in my real, non-NCSS life: teaching full-time in a public high school classroom.

### The Critical Role of Teachers

After 23 years and thousands of 15- and 16-year-old students, I feel confident to speak as an "expert" about being a teacher. But I am certainly not the only teacher in this organization. NCSS members are ALL teachers in one way or another, irrespective of what their job titles may be or their assignments entail. We are teachers—not politicians, not business executives, but teachers. There is no greater calling than to be a teacher; next to their parents, there is no more influential person in the life of the young than their teachers. The power to influence and direct young minds falls to no other profession, and we in the social studies have a unique and unparalleled responsibility, for we work in a discipline that recognizes, values, and celebrates humanity and its accomplishments through the ages, now and into the future. Our responsibility, then, is to remember the students that we teach and the lessons that we want them to retain once they leave our charge.

The world in which we live is a complex and often troubling place; it always has been and undoubtedly always will be. So many of the troubles facing us today are a direct result of misunderstandings caused by a lack of contact with others. It is a human trait—or, perhaps more accurately, a fault—that we invent and then perpetuate stereotypes to simplify our imagined understanding of others. Such stereotyping inevitably causes nations to see one another's people as caricatures rather than individuals. It makes one area of the nation feel superior, or inferior, to another because of regional customs that are not understood. It fosters misunderstanding based on religion or ethnic background or skin color. We frequently know others only in broad, simplified, shadowy, and often unflattering generalizations that more often than not emphasize or invent the negative. That is also the way that our students know the world and their neighbors. Like it or not, those are the exact things that today's classroom teachers, regardless of what courses they teach, combat constantly.

There is much talk in this last decade of the twentieth century that technology will eventually shrink the world, speeding communications to the point that we will begin to see other cultures differently and cooperation will result, thus leading to the breakdown of traditional stereotypes. This talk suggests that the power of the media, used to its best advantage, will show that stereotypes are inaccurate, that people are really more alike than different, and a new awareness and understanding will evolve. I do not think that will be the case. Voices on the radio and images on the television are only that—images—and can be ignored or switched off as easily as a light. They have no emotion; they do not involve the observer; they are devoid of the human touch.

No, technology is not the answer to understanding others. It may prove to be a tool, but the real key to better understanding and appreciation of others is direct one-to-one contact with a knowledgeable, honest, and caring adult: the teacher. The media, all media, print as well as electronic, tend to deal with how different groups are, and the news dwells on negative aspects of our times. Seldom does the media offer suggestions for understanding or solution. In such a world, as H. G. Wells said, "Human history become[s] more and more a race between education and catastrophe." Only through personal contact with their teachers—not books or images or electronic pulses—can students really begin to understand and then relate to the humanity of which they are a part. Only that way can they begin to see that they can make a difference—that, through their understanding and action, hope not despair can be their future.

Let us not forget that our students, be they seven or seventeen, are the most human among us. They are wide-eyed and eager to learn. More than that, they carry their emotions close to the surface; they respond to honesty, sincerity, and enthusiasm; they are keenly aware when their teacher speaks from the heart, from experience, from knowledge based on formal and informal education; and they respond in turn. That is the thing social studies teachers have almost as second nature: an appreciation and affection for the human condition. And that is what we must work to instill in our students.

Yet, to instill such appreciation of an affection for humankind, we must not teach at our students, but rather work with them, for as Palsgrave so aptly put it in the sixteenth century, students are "better fostered than taught." So often we forget—not that we don't know, but we forget because of our own affection for our individual disciplines—that our students do not necessarily share our enthusiasm for the intricacies of those disciplines. We are not making junior historians or geographers or sociologists or economists; we are working to create caring, informed, and participating human beings and citizens. Anyone can impart facts; any media can provide statistics; but, to quote the Chinese proverb, "A load of books does not equal one good teacher."

## Relevance Is Key

Let me give you an example of what I mean by taking our students at their point of interest and working with them, yet keeping in mind that the goal is to give guidance and knowledge beyond where they currently are. It is an example that Cicero would have agreed with when he said, "Not only is there an art in knowing a thing, but also a certain art in teaching it."

Not too long ago, Michael Jordan, the Chicago Bulls superstar, announced he was quitting professional basketball. On the broad scale of human survival, where bullets replace reason, starvation continues despite stockpiled abundance, and former communist governments struggle with their seemingly quixotic goal of democracy, this announcement was an insignificant event. It was not insignificant to my sophomore history class, however. You might assume that our high school's geographical proximity to Chicago makes these students especially interested in what happens to the Bulls and Jordan, but it's not just that. During the remainder of the week Jordan made his announcement, I had, in conjunction with my NCSS duties, occasion to talk with classroom teachers in five states on both coasts. Each one said that his or her students were just as interested and knowledgeable about Jordan's retirement as were my students.

What does this have to do with social studies and my emphasis on creating understanding? Simply, everything! All teachers know that getting students' attention and using what they already know and care about is perhaps the most effective way to instill knowledge. As a colleague puts it, "They learn without realizing it." Now, please don't assume that I believe all that we teach must be peppy, cute, and current. Quite the contrary. Because students must have a solid basis for reasoning, facts are extremely important. Yet there is much more to a good social studies classroom than merely sharing data. This trade-off poses a dilemma that we should not dismiss lightly.

One of the problems all teachers face is finding enough time for the dissemination and explanation of core information about their subjects. We seem to be especially prone to such problems in the social studies, especially with today's proliferation of information and increasing demands to quantify what students know rather than focusing on what they can do with their knowledge. But we must not be deluded that such difficulties come strictly from outside, for we ourselves so often forget that we are dealing with the human condition, not just facts or statistics. Remember Goethe's admonition: "A teacher who can arouse a feeling for one single good action . . . accomplishes more than he who fills our memory with rows and rows of objects." To help our students learn to make informed and reasoned decisions, we must utilize the most important tool we have available to us: the students themselves.

In the last sentence of NCSS's definition, we state that "The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions . . . in an interdependent world." Michael Jordan's news conference was carried live throughout the United States and 57 foreign countries. The announcements headlined the morning papers, not only in New York and Chicago but in London, Rome, and Tokyo. Even President Clinton took time to acknowledge Jordan's departure. What could be a better example of an interdependent world than that?

In the case of Jordan, students were interested, knowledgeable, and ready to talk about his leaving the NBA, and so we talked. We didn't talk just about Jordan, the player; we talked about the impact he has had on the economy, the public services related to his charities, his role as a model for youth, and yes, about the gambling allegations and actions that tarnished part of his image. We talked about why he was leaving a brilliant career, worth millions of dollars, at his peak; whether the violence in our society that had taken his father's life had hastened his decision to retire; if the continued pressure of fame and the ceaseless scrutiny of the press was a factor; and about how each of us, everyday, is in some small way affected by those same things. We talked about how the world recognized him from the Olympics and advertising, how television is linking distant areas together, and the influence instant communications has on public opinion and world decisions, for good and for bad.

Because I teach world history and our then-current unit of study was Rome, the Jordan discussion nicely snaked its way back to the importance of communications in running a government and how modern technologies could have affected the Roman Empire; how violence negatively affected the confidence and moral fiber of the empire and contributed to its decline; how worsened economic conditions affected the populace; how the continued threat of military involvement placed stress on society; and how we are not as different from those ancient Romans as we sometimes think. Yet it was a much richer discussion than just a fancy way to tie today to yesterday for the sake of studying the Romans. It involved the students in dialogue with one another and with me, utilizing bits and pieces of all the social sciences.

## Achieving Our Goals through Standards

Good teachers know instinctively that they cannot teach any single discipline well without using all disciplines; and they can do none of that unless students are interested in what is going on. Social studies teachers have a unique and wonderful opportunity everyday to "use it all" and excite their students. That's what "integrated study of the social sciences and humanities" in the NCSS definition means. We, as social studies teachers, have more than anyone else the ability to actualize Illinois writer Elbert Hubbard's declaration that "the teacher is one who makes two ideas grow where only one grew before."

It is my ardent desire to see NCSS foster such growth by encouraging teachers to recognize the variety of ways they can accomplish our mutual goal of teaching good social studies: that means involving the students and helping them see their humanity. Yet NCSS must not lose sight of the importance of helping teachers learn what to do and how to do their job. The most helpful and appropriate way to do that is to produce clear and usable standards.

As we are all aware, the educational community has been enraptured with standards for some time, and there are, of course, a number of excellent standards projects in progress. I must assume that each standards group at some point looked in the dictionary and found that a standard is "an acknowledged basis for comparing or measuring; a degree or level of requirement, excellence, or attainment." That sounds like the kind of mission a standards group should hope to accomplish, and, in one way or another, they all appear to be approaching their own standards with just those thoughts in mind.

Another equally important definition of a standard is a flag or banner. Standards groups are using this definition just as surely as they do the educational one. But let's not jump to conclusions about the first definition being good and the second considerably less desirable. In some ways, they are equally important, for as a flag, standards tell other professionals and the public what each group is all about. Nothing is wrong with that. In fact, much good has come from publicly flying the different standards' flags. Each group has been forced to think seriously about its relationship to the other groups, and most importantly its impact on the student. I am somewhat concerned that this is precisely the area where the standards process is falling short: its concern with the students, their abilities, and involving them in the learning process.

What concerns me even more—and it does have a direct impact on both the student and the teacher—is that some have tried to pit the various disciplines against one another. On the surface, it sometimes appears that each group feels it has a monopoly on what is right for students. While we all have that parochial attitude toward our area of academic training that I spoke of earlier, none of the standards groups should feel threatened or inferior to any other, for you will remember it is impossible to teach anything well without utilizing some of everything.

Finally, we have come to the crux of my concern and caution about the whole push for standards. No standards, no matter how brilliantly conceived, academically grounded, beautifully written, or widely distributed, will have much of an impact unless the teacher finds them appropriate for the students in his or her own classroom and community. Standards are, after all, to help teachers know what is important, how they can approach teaching so that students will learn those important things, and ultimately to provide guidance or even specific methods to assess student progress in attaining them. Few classroom teachers will ever adopt any set of standards totally, but they will pick those standards, or more accurately those part of standards, that they like and see as pertinent to their students.

It is just that kind of utility, coupled with the scholarly thought that produced them, that encourages me about the NCSS standards. I don't mean to imply that the other efforts are lacking. Far from it. They are excellent in establishing solid positions for their particular interest. The NCSS standards, however, have been developed with the definition of social studies as the central focus, which means they integrate the study of the social sciences and humanities. Our standards attempt, and I think succeed, in providing a "coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences."

It is just such an approach that I was advocating earlier. In my view, it is impossible to do a credible job of educating without using the full spectrum of our disciplines. I urge the NCSS Standards Task Force to continue their development of standards that are more than lists of nice things, but are usable directives for the classroom.

In closing, let me again remind you that it is the social studies teacher who has the essential job of broadening young minds to the wonder of other societies, peoples, and points of view. We are functionaries through which our students can become better citizens and members of the human race. Never, for one minute, think or let anyone else think that the social studies classroom is not the most important place in our educational system. Henry Adams, although talking about education in general, could have more accurately specified the social studies teacher when he said, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."

# 1994

# MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE CLASSROOM: STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SUCCESS IS THE DIFFERENCE THAT COUNTS

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**This presidential address was presented on November 18, 1994 to the 74th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Phoenix, Arizona. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 59 (January 1995): 47-53. ERIC Number: EJ 500 280.**

# 1994

# Meeting the Challenges of Making a Difference in the Classroom: Students' Academic Success Is the Difference that Counts

*Robert J. Stahl*

## 1. Introduction and Context

I am not pleased with many things that I see and hear occurring in this nation and world. For example, like you, I detest the frequency and nature of violence, especially among members of families to one another, and among young people. I also detest the growing trend of racial and ethnic hatred, prejudice, and discrimination, and what they mean for all people in this nation. I am concerned about the growth in the number and size of gangs; the number of students and teachers who fear for their safety and lives on school campuses and where they live; and the number of adolescents who are dropping out of school. I am also concerned about the test results that reveal that vast numbers of students are not gaining the academic competence that is possible in every area of the school curriculum.

Unfortunately, information from nearly every source reveals that many of the negative behaviors and attitudes currently observed will probably increase in the future.

These and countless other negative behaviors and attitudes that represent decisions made by young and old alike in our society are symptoms, not causes, of dysfunctional conditions that are not being addressed sufficiently at any level of our society, including in our schools.

The positive conditions that are missing and that schools could provide require sustained academic environments. In these, all students from the earliest grades onward would:

a. Establish and maintain multiple avenues of success in academic areas that are worthwhile, that contribute significantly to being successful in living personally and socially productive lives within and outside the school world, and that, if carried out, will contribute to, or at least not be negative to, fulfilling their individual potentials and promoting the public good;

b. Receive adequate attention as persons for the competence that each has attained;

c. Be treated with respect and dignity as individual human beings;

d. Comprehend, reflect upon, and master the application of sound academic concepts, perspectives, and inquiry and reasoning patterns to guide their sense-making and meaning-assigning efforts about themselves and their multiple worlds;

e. Have a sense of belonging as members of socially viable groups; and

f. Have appropriate opportunities to participate equally in and gain equal access to activities and statuses that are legally open to all citizens of this nation.

Conditions that run counter to these are dysfunctional. They tend to lead to decisions and actions that have negative effects on the individuals themselves, and often on other individuals and the environment.

What goes on under the auspices of the school affects the quality of life in this nation and the world, one child at a time. I am convinced that significant academic success in school settings will have a tremendous impact on bringing about and maintaining the conditions by which young people can function positively and productively in the worlds in which they have to (as well as choose to) live.

### 2. Teachers, Changes, and Teacher and Student Success

If we are to bring about the conditions for maximizing the success of students, we must be prepared to make the changes necessary to maximize our own successes in our roles as educators. Most important, we must never accept that we have been highly effective or highly successful until after we have ample evidence that nearly every student has attained and maintained the abilities, perspectives, and orientations that we have targeted.

### Practical Ideas and Perspectives that Bring about Changes that Will Contribute to Greater Student Success

What are practical ideas and perspectives that have the power to bring about the changes needed to enhance student success? I will provide a partial answer to this question. Before I begin, I want to point out that "practical" does not mean easy, convenient, comfortable, simple, popular, or readily applicable.

The currently popular phrase "All children can learn," reiterated by educators and lay persons with equal enthusiasm, is a truism and understates the potential of every child. Certainly, every child can learn; indeed, there is nothing that we can do ethically or morally to prevent a person from learning. Children will learn whether they are in school or never attend school. We must get past the truisms to a sincere concern for:

1. What[1] is learned relative to what needs to be learned;
2. When[2] and where[3] what is learned can be and is used; and
3. The quality[4] of what is learned relative to each person's functional and enhancement needs within today's and tomorrow's worlds.

More specifically, we must go beyond the simplistic truism that "All children can learn," and accept the implications and challenges that go with the claim that "Nearly every child can be successful," and its corollary that "Within a sound curricular, instructional, and assessment program, nearly every child can successfully achieve and maintain nearly every outcome ability that we target for them." Accepting this notion and then committing ourselves to achieving it will not come easily.

If we are to increase our effectiveness, we must go beyond merely selecting and advocating particular standards, results, outcomes, performance objectives, or whatever we choose to call them. We must work individually and cooperatively to gain the perspectives, information bases, and abilities needed to change our current notions and behaviors to ensure that nearly every student achieves and maintains these outcome abilities, perspectives, and attitudes.

If we are to go about the business of facilitating changes in students, we must be in the business of changing ourselves in ways that will maximize the changes (i.e., the learning and achievement) we expect of students. In another sense, if we are to take our responsibilities as social studies educators to heart, we must make the changes in mind, attitude, beliefs, and practice that are necessary to move students beyond learning within and about the domain of the social studies to being very successful persons and competent participants within the civic communities in which they must and will choose to live. In the social studies, a commitment to high levels of learner success is crucial to our nation's future, because lack of success in our classrooms means that children will leave school with less of the information, abilities, perspectives, and attitudes needed to function competently as citizens of this nation and members of a pluralistic global community.

Accepting these notions relative to learner success implies a serious commitment to change what has been traditional instructional practice for many and to build future curricular, instructional, and assessment practice on ideas, concepts, and principles that will optimize learner success on all levels. Such a commitment also implies that we become far more reflective on and critical of our own ideas and actions in terms of students' actual achievement relative to their potential level of achievement. In other words, we must not be satisfied with some minor academic or social gains by students when far greater gains are possible if the curricular and instructional environment are modified in ways beyond what has been accomplished so far.

To shape our thoughts and actions, I offer four sets of ideas.

### 1. *Ideas about Curricular and Instructional Results and Outcomes that can Make a Difference*

In a very real sense, we are results oriented. We look at what is occurring in our nation and attribute many of the negative things to the results of schooling. Parents, legislators, administrators, and teachers envision that schools will produce particular results relative to students' knowledge, abilities, and perspectives. We engage students in classroom activities because we expect certain results. Tests are given to assess the results of instruction. We value and congratulate students who demonstrate their retention of targeted content and abilities (i.e., the results of learning) and consider what is to be done with students who did not adequately learn this content or these abilities (i.e., also the results of learning). To say that results (i.e., student outcome abilities) are not important is to ignore the actualities of life in the classroom.

Furthermore, resisting or ignoring the selection of unambiguous student outcome abilities, standards-based performance expectations, or student outcome objectives will not eliminate outcomes or results. Regardless of our opinion of outcomes, students and educators cannot escape outcomes, results, or exiting performance abilities, because whatever students can do and cannot do at the end of the year or program, at whatever degree of quality, are actual results (or outcomes) of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment opportunities provided within schools.

Because we cannot prevent the school environment and classroom activities from having results, our energies must first be directed toward determining the knowledge, abilities, and orientations that are most important for students to achieve. In other words, we must begin by agreeing on the most important results we desire in students. Each result or outcome (i.e., the specific abilities students are to master, retain and reuse during and after the end of the year and program) must be described in clear, operational language. Only after this is done should we focus on doing what is needed to enable students to succeed.

All ambiguous descriptions of expected targeted abilities must be rejected. I will take the word "understand" as an example. A search of the literature for definitions and attributes of what this word means produces more than 60 definitions, many of which are directly contradictory of one another or are equally vague. Often-used descriptors such as "identify," "explain," and "analyze," just to name a few, are equally ambiguous terms. If students are to achieve the success that is desired, we must describe each particular ability in such a way that students have sufficient, clear descriptions regarding what they must learn and do to demonstrate mastery of that skill.

Accepting a new set of curriculum standards within a social studies framework, using different resources or methods of teaching, and doing things in the classroom that are different from what is typically done do not mean that we will automatically have a significant impact on the amount and quality of student learning. From my perspective, the social studies curriculums that we need to build must go beyond themes, frameworks, and experiences and activities within social studies classrooms. The most powerful social studies curriculums must describe the specific abilities that students are to attain during the school year and demonstrate on their own at the end of each year and the overall program. The outcomes selected eventually must be used as the basis for test items to measure and assess students' academic success.

### 2. *Concepts and Principles from Cognitive Psychology that can Make a Difference*

Sound programs and instruction must be founded on viable concepts and principles associated with how humans think, learn, make decisions, use what they learn, and act. The Information-Constructivist perspective within the field of cognitive psychology offers a set of viable concepts, principles and models that is descriptive of human cognition and is practical for educators on all levels (Stahl 1989, 1992a, b). I will share selected Information-Constructivist concepts along with a sample of their implications.

The brain can process, store, retrieve, and apply information only. Therefore, students and adults cannot store or retrieve experiences, emotions, processes or behaviors. We can only store information in, from, and about each of these. Given that this is the case, we must not assume that facilitating students' experiences or participation in particular processes will automatically lead to the permanent storage of either.

Furthermore, during and after each experience or processing task, students make decisions about what information they will store, from, in, and about each. Students decide to "forget" the overwhelming part of the particular information they consider, experience and process. In addition, there are no guarantees that an experience or processing activity will be adequate, correct, or aligned with targeted results and that an experience and processing task will automatically lead to the storage of correct information for retrieval. Believing that processes or experiences automatically lead to correct ideas and abilities and that whatever is generated during them will automatically be learned are two misconceptions that we must avoid as we move toward implementing curriculum decisions for students to achieve desired permanent abilities.

For our purposes, *thinking* is defined as *any and all on-going brain-involved operations, activities and events that include or make use of information under the conscious or nonconscious direction of the learner.* A person cannot think in the present or about the past or future without information. Humans begin thinking before they are born and will do so until they die. The focus of instruction must never be to get students to think as though they weren't already thinking;[5] rather, it must be on facilitating

- *what* students think about,
- *when* students think about it,
- *how* students think about it,
- *how to ensure that students are thinking about it successfully,*
- *how students must think about information in order to store, retrieve and use it later*, and
- *how to ensure students continue to think in particular ways* well beyond the end of formal school instruction into their lives after schooling.

Thinking must not be equated with learning.

*Learning* is *acquiring new or revised information, perspectives, or abilities-to-use information such that either of these is within the person twenty-three and more hours beyond the period when these were first encountered or completed* (Stahl 1992 a, b and c).[6]

Initial learning involves an active series of internal information-processing events that each person completes so that the information appropriate to the construction and use of a particular ability is placed in Permanent Storage.[7] While all learning is a result of thinking, much of what is "thought about" is not learned (i.e., stored permanently). For instance, 70 to 90 percent of what people think about as they hear this address will not be stored in Permanent Storage for their use beyond the occasion on which they hear it—much less be stored in their Permanent Storage 23 hours from now.

As novices in many areas of what is to be learned in school, students need guidance regarding the particular information, ideas, and abilities they need to attend to, retain, master and reuse both during instructional tasks and well beyond the end of their schooling. Without such guidance, students are likely to store less of the needed information, to process inadequately the information that is encountered, and to develop a sense that they cannot be successful learners of school-taught content and abilities.

For the Information-Constructivist, each person, from before birth, is a dynamic, active and continual decision maker. Personal versions of the world, self, and experiences are continually being generated, constructed, revised, applied, tested, assessed and frequently forgotten (e.g., Stahl 1987, 1992). Each person alone and internally decides what phenomena, materials, and data will be attended to and how each piece of information will be made meaningful and be organized.

Furthermore, each person assigns meanings to, makes sense of, and constructs a personal version of everything that he or she encounters throughout his or her daily life. These meanings and this version emerge as individuals apply existing sets of information (sometimes called "prior knowledge") to manipulate the information encountered through the sense organs, invented or recalled from Permanent Storage. These personal meanings *and these meanings alone* influence and determine all personal judgments and interpretations, and nearly all actions.

Given this conception of the learner, no outside source, including the best teacher or set of materials, can transfer information, ideas, or experiences directly into learners. Students cannot absorb information, meanings, values, processes, attitudes, or feelings as though they were sponges. They must invent each of these on their own as they perceive each to be. When I make an address like this, my direct impact ends when what you see and hear reaches your eyes and ears. What is done beyond that point is totally up to you. Consequently, I will influence you to the extent that you allow me to do so.

The implications for teachers of each learner inventing and constructing his or her personal meanings and versions of the world and his or her self are staggering. If we are to build a successful social studies program that will significantly increase student learning, we must build it in alignment with thinking, inventing, and learning as these occur *within* all learners.

If we are to be more effective in helping students master particular information-processing abilities, then currently accepted notions of thinking processes must be changed, including abandoning nearly every conception that educators have about thinking that is related to their versions of Bloom's Cognitive Domain Taxonomy. We must seek and use new models that are directly aligned with actual cognitive activities and abilities rather than rely on ideas about thinking and learning that are simple and traditional.

We must accept that *no* learned information-processing ability occurs without the information bases needed to guide its activities. We must accept the notion that all acquired abilities are *information-based, information-driven, information-guided,* and, often, *information-producing* internal tasks.

Consequently, students are able to successfully complete nearly every cognitive processing ability (commonly referred to as a "thinking skill") to the extent that they possess and actually use the information bases aligned with it (Stahl 1987). For instance, individuals complete the processing tasks of comparing according to the information bases that they use to guide what they believe is needed to compare things. From early elementary through graduate school, a major reason why students are not highly competent in comparing nearly everything that they want to compare is that they lack the empowering information bases that will enable them to be continually successful at comparing.

These information bases are learned, are learnable, and can be taught and mastered within school settings. There is no acceptable or sound reason to excuse nearly every student from mastering most of the processing abilities that we expect them to use successfully in classrooms. Social studies teachers must specify and teach the information bases required for every information processing ability that we expect students to use and master. Furthermore, only when a person becomes proficient and competent in a particular ability, and maintains the level of proficiency over an extended period of time, can we say he or she is "skilled at" that ability.[8]

The ultimate goal of instruction—to achieve desired permanent results—is to enable students to complete the internal information-processing tasks needed to enable them to store information permanently, and later use the information that is directly aligned with expected or desired abilities, perspectives, and orientations.

### 3. *Ideas Concerning What Students Must Have in Order to be Successful that Can Make a Difference*

The Information-Constructivist (IC) *Model of School Learning* provides a comprehensive view of what is needed for learner success (Stahl 1989, 1992 a, b). This model describes what is needed for learner success *from an inside-the-learner perspective* in a manner that is functional for making decisions within all phases of planning, teaching, and evaluating students' abilities. This model is expressed below in the form of a mathematical function. (See Figure 1, page 368.)

In narrative language, this model states that the degree of success in learning of any acquirable ability, perspective, or orientation is a function of the quality and quantity of

a. The *appropriate information* one *possesses and can presently use* relative to the information one *needs to have* and *be able to use,*

b. The *appropriate internal processing tasks* one *has completed and can presently complete* relative to the processing tasks one *needs to and presently is able to complete* successfully, and

c. The *productive time* one *has spent learning* relative to the time one *needs to spend learning.*

To be successful in attaining *and then maintaining* a particular ability, each learner needs 100% of the information that is needed to complete that ability, needs to complete 100% of the needed internal information processing tasks aligned with that ability, and needs to spend 100% of the productive time needed to learn that ability.

Having more than is needed of one or two of these elements does not compensate for inadequacies in and insufficiencies of the other(s). For instance, having students acquire more information will not compensate for their failure to complete needed internal processing tasks or their failure to spend the necessary productive time on on-task learning. In addition, increasing one's effort to learn without access to and use of the information, without completing required information-processing tasks, and without spending the time needed will not make up for inadequacies in any of these three areas. In typical classrooms, teachers currently assume that only one or two of these three elements are needed by students. Consequently, they tend to provide learners with opportunities for an overabundance of one of these elements, limit or prevent student access to the other elements, or ignore the other elements.

In light of earlier statements and this model, processes and processing cannot exist without information and cannot themselves be stored. In addition, for successful learning, students must process information aligned with targeted outcomes, must have the information bases needed to complete the appropriate processing, must use this information correctly, and must spend the necessary and sufficient time processing the relevant information. Process-oriented instruction often does not take into account these factors about processes, processing, and the roles and limitations of processing on learning. Social studies educators must accept these roles and limitations and act in ways consistent with all three elements that students need, rather than overemphasize one at the expense of the others.

At the beginning of instruction, learners will vary in the extent to which they need and can use must-learn outcome-aligned information, can

## Figure 1

### An Information-Constructivist Model of School Learning

$$\text{Degree of success in learning} = f\left[\underset{\text{(100\% needed)}}{\left(\frac{\text{Appropriate infobits actually possessed and able to be recovered and used}}{\text{Appropriate infobits needed to be possessed, recovered and used}}\right)}, \underset{\text{(100\% needed)}}{\left(\frac{\text{Appropriate internal processing tasks actually completed and can complete with success}}{\text{Appropriate internal processing tasks needed to be engaged in, completed with success, and maintained}}\right)}, \underset{\text{(100\% needed)}}{\left(\frac{\text{Actual qualitative time already spent learning}}{\text{Actual qualitative time needed to be spent learning}}\right)}\right]$$

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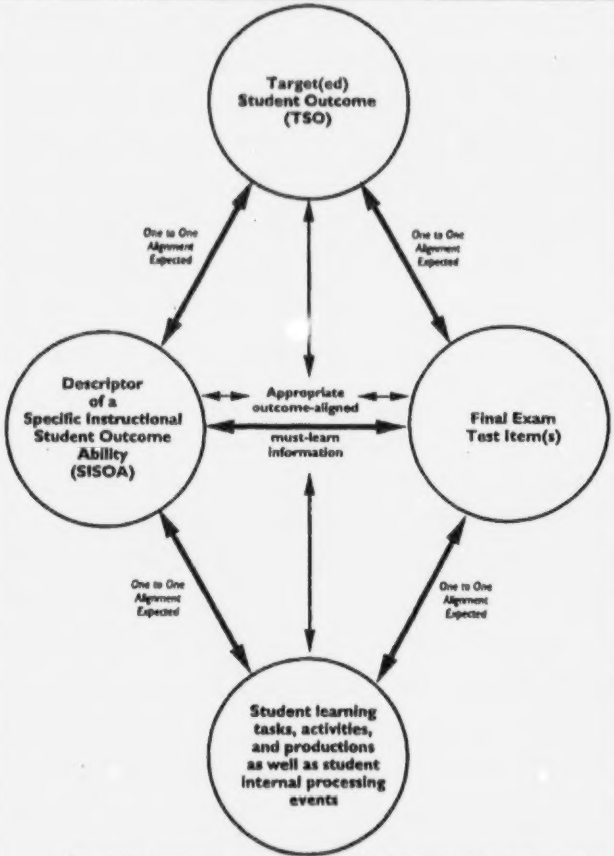
## Figure 2


Target(ed) Student Outcome (TSO)
One to One Alignment Expected
One to One Alignment Expected
Descriptor of a Specific Instructional Student Outcome Ability (SISOA)
Appropriate outcome-aligned must-learn information
Final Exam Test Item(s)
One to One Alignment Expected
One to One Alignment Expected
Student learning tasks, activities, and productions as well as student internal processing events

Four major components of curriculum decision-making and instruction in direct alignment with each other and with the appropriate information students must learn to be successful.

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complete appropriate internal processing tasks, and have spent productive time learning the must-learn information and completing must-complete processing tasks. If we are to take students from "where they are" to attain the potential they are capable of reaching, then instructional situations must provide students with opportunities for success with each of these three elements as needed by each student for each ability selected to be learned.

These elements are critical for teachers because every targeted ability, behavior, and attitude requires students to possess its information base, process and use this information base, and spend the time needed to learn to possess, process and use this information. No "thinking skill" and "higher order skill" are possible without these elements. No outcome performance ability is free of all three elements.[9]

### 4. *Ideas Relevant to Instruction that Illustrate Making a Difference*[10]

Time does not permit me to provide a lengthy statement of changes that can be made in instructional situations to make a difference to students' success. I will provide one example to illustrate the point I want to make.

I direct teachers to avoid asking the one-word "Why?" question. If you are like most people, your first response is to ask that very one-word "Why?" question. One very important reason to avoid its use is that responses to "Why" are associated with at least five categories of information: reasons, causes, justifications, motives, and rationales. Hence, students have a one in five chance of choosing the category of information you are requesting. A second equally important reason is that the "Why?" by itself does not cue students as to the minimum number of reasons, causes, etc., they need to provide to satisfy your request. With no number specified, they must guess the number they need in addition to the category of information that they are seeking.

Consequently, while we believe that the one-word "Why?" question is an inviting one, from the students' perspective, it is a disinviting one. There are too many opportunities for students to be wrong. Hence, it is safer and more viable for them not to attempt a response than to attempt one.

If we make a change from the simple stand-alone "Why?" to, for instance, "What are three reasons why. . . ?", the students are given the information that they need to direct them on forming a correct response (i.e., the request is for three reasons), thus reducing the risk that they will be unsuccessful. In short, we change our behavior to increase the probability that more students will answer the question correctly.

As another example, the notion that teachers and students should "pause and wait in silence for three or more seconds" after a question has been advocated for twenty-five years because of its potential for improving classroom interaction and for helping students' academic success. Yet in spite of its potential benefits and the fact that teachers can tell one another about "wait time," observations in classrooms reveal that the vast majority of teachers are *not* using wait-time behaviors after nearly every question they ask. This non-use of this behavior reveals that informing teachers of effective, practical behavior changes they could make is insufficient to move them to change their behaviors. To date I have a list of more than 75 reasons why teachers say they do not use wait time in their classrooms. As of now, we still do not know what will bring teachers to change even this much of their routine behaviors.

There are countless changes in our behaviors in classroom situations that can create multiple ways for students to be successful. If we want students to be more successful than they have been, we must consciously break old habits and routines, provide them with different environments, and ask them to engage in different behaviors. But beforehand, we must make the changes that make us different educators than we now are. The modifications of the one-word "Why?" question and the use of wait-time behaviors are just two examples of simple changes that can make a big difference to learners.

The ideas presented here are representative of those than can eventually make a major difference in shaping teacher and student behaviors to generate the student successes we desire. They will affect your thinking and behaviors to the extent that you allow them to do so. I invite you to allow them to do so.

## 3. Epilogue

The Standards documents in Social Studies, American History, Geography, World History, and Civics issued within the past three months provide a great deal of information relative to constructing powerful social studies programs. None of these documents is sufficient in and of itself to build a sound interdisciplinary program of study likely to prepare students adequately for success in and beyond school.

Ultimately, groups of educators will need to generate a viable framework for a social studies program that answers the question: Of all the information and abilities students could learn, what are those that are most necessary for students to function as we would like, inside, outside, and well beyond the classroom? These decisions must always be translated into descriptors stating precisely and clearly what students have to be able to do at the end of the year or program to be successful. However, even if the recommended "outcomes" in the standards documents were clear and accepted, I fear that the standards will not have much impact in terms of what students actually achieve academically in our classrooms.

These decisions on outcomes must be followed by other decisions and activities that are in direct alignment with what students need in order to attain the abilities targeted. This alignment is illustrated in Figure 2 on page 368. The linkages among the four elements consist of information and the uses that students must make of the information. The element of student activities is decided after the target student outcome, the specific objectives, and final exam test items are determined. As the figure reveals, the processing tasks, instructional experiences, and classroom activities that are completed by and within each student *serve as the means by which each moves toward attaining each targeted outcome ability*. What each student does and experiences should be directly aligned with what each is expected to learn.

To date, I have witnessed far too much concern for what should be going on in classrooms and what the operationalization of the various standards means in terms of classroom activities and materials. Far too little concern is shown for generating clear descriptions of what students are to achieve as exiting abilities and what they need internally to be successful. Unless this emphasis changes, social studies classrooms in the next century will not look much different from those of today, which is not much different from those of twenty, thirty, and forty or more years ago. While more technology in the form of computers will be used, tomorrow's and today's classrooms will essentially be mirror images of one another. Unfortunately, I fear that the results of instruction in these classrooms will be much the same. In short, unless we change our conceptual bases, abilities, and priorities in learning theory, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, there will be few changes in students' learning and outcome abilities in the future.

As educators, we are about the business of change; indeed, the specific purpose of being a teacher is to help individuals change their information bases, abilities, perspectives, and behaviors in ways consistent with those we believe are important for young people and adults to have and use. Furthermore, the degree of the actual success of our efforts as educators must always be determined by the *actual success* of students in attaining the changes that we expect.

To meet the challenges of helping students to be successful in achieving the student outcomes that we select, we must work together toward the changes that must first occur within each of us. We must seek, master, and apply new ideas and concepts that will ultimately change our decisions and actions. Unless this is done, we are not going to be able to create and maintain the social studies programs that our students need. A major step in making the differences needed for maximizing students' success is to be committed to the notion that it is the amount and quality of students' success that ultimately are the differences that will count and should count for them, for us, and for this nation.

## Notes

1. By "what," I mean the specific information, concepts, conceptions, perspectives, abilities, etc., students need to acquire or those determined necessary for students to acquire.

2. By "when," I mean the specific moments at which and situations in which the information, concepts, etc., mastered are to be used and can be used effectively.

3. By "where," I mean the specific places or locations in which the information, concepts, etc., mastered are to be used and can be used effectively.

4. By "quality," I mean the level of ability students have relative to a particular concept, etc.; how proficient (or accurate) students are in using the particular concept, information, etc.; and the level of automatization attained in using the particular concept, ability, etc.

5. Because students as humans have been thinking since before birth, we must abandon our notion that students' brains are like a dead battery that we must "jump start" to get them thinking for the first time, or since the last time they were thinking.

6. The twenty-three-hours is a "rule of thumb" period for instructional settings because students typically return to the same class period approximately twenty-three hours after the class ended the previous day.

7. Permanent Storage is similar to the traditional concept of Long Term Storage, but it does not have the ability to search for or retrieve information. Rather, Permanent Storage is like a library within which the librarian (Long Term Memory) goes into storage to locate and retrieve materials.

8. Consequently, we cannot learn skills, but may become skilled at a particular ability. The use of the term "skill" as a synonym for "process" or "ability" is a dysfunctional practice that frees educators from the responsibility to ensure that students attain and maintain a high degree of proficiency in the particular ability. We must return to the earlier meaning of the term "skill" as a referent to the quality of an ability rather than a synonym for an ability or process. For example, we may speak of students becoming "skilled at" analyzing, but should not say someone is using or has the skill of analyzing.

9. The IC Model of School Learning is especially relevant to educators and academic learning in classrooms in at least four ways. First, expected achievement will never occur when the learner is limited solely to receiving information. Second, the extent of achievement, at any moment, corresponds to the fulfillment of these three distinct variables at that moment. Third, it points out the need for curriculum planners and teachers (a) to articulate more clearly the categories of the must-learn information underlying each outcome; (b) to provide students more frequent opportunities for engaging and successfully completing outcome-aligned processing tasks; and (c) to allow students to devote the on-task time each needs to spend processing outcome-aligned information. Fourth, if

the targeted ability is to be refined as well as maintained, instructional situations must build in appropriate rehearsal time and activities over an extended number of days.

10. Once again the ideas and examples here are representative of changes that teachers can make that can significantly alter student responses on tests and during discussions and affect the quality of their learning.

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# 1995

## THE PRICE OF CIVILIZATION: COMPETENCE AND CONSTANT VIGIL

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**This presidential address was presented on November 10, 1995 to the 75th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Chicago, Illinois. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 60 (January 1996): 6-8. ERIC Number: EJ 500 281.**

# 1995

## The Price of Civilization: Competence and Constant Vigil

*H. Michael Hartoonian*

It has been suggested by Oscar Wilde, among others, that our people know the price of everything and the value of nothing. Today, it seems that we may not even know the price of that which is most precious, that is, the ideas and behaviors having to do with the sustainability of civilization and nature itself. What is so troublesome about this condition is that we know from our study of people and society that what is most precious in a culture is also indefensible. A people cannot defend beauty, nor love, nor even happiness. By the time it occurs to us that beauty needs defending, the concept is already gone and we are left with ugliness. Qualities of love, freedom, justice, happiness and the aesthetic life demand a vigil of virtue made possible only through learning, and learning that is intrinsically driven. A vigil of virtue practiced by individuals and guided by a common societal vision is a prerequisite to an understanding of the good life: not the good lifestyle, but the good life.

There is a price to be paid in order to acquire this virtue and to approach what we might call intellectual elegance. Price is the worth or cost at which something is acquired and/or maintained. The something here to be acquired and maintained is civilization itself, and the question of our willingness to pay the price for civilization may seem rhetorical or academic, but at this time in history when we are moving rapidly from one economic epoch toward another, when our fundamental institutions are in disarray, and when the feelings and reality of dislocation are everywhere apparent, we might want to reconsider and rejuvenate our academic craft, the craft of teaching and learning—the craft of scholarship and leadership.

The ultimate work of education is to learn to be a human being. As human beings, we are always active with two kinds of tasks—reconstructing civilization and reconstructing ourselves. We are always in the process of trying to be better, to live better, and to construct better places. And, we do this through conversations with each other and with the cultural heritage of the human family. Unless we engage in this conversation, we cannot become fully human. The conversation of most interest and importance today is the one that will help us understand our collective identity as we leave one economic and culturally fragmented epoch and ready ourselves to inherit a new cultural and economic landscape.

How like our lingering parents, Adam and Eve, we are.
"Some natural tears they drop, but wipe them soon."
As John Milton relates in *Paradise Lost*, as they leave their first home.

> The world was all before them
> Where to choose
> Their place of rest, and
> Providence their guide;
> They, hand in hand,
> With wandering steps and slow
> Through Eden took their solitary way.

Our present identity began with our loss of Eden, as harmonious paradise gave way to the need to define and hold territory. Throughout human history people have defined themselves in relationship to their land and its boundaries. This necessitated war and warriors. Until now, we Americans could see ourselves most clearly in the images we held of war, particularly World War II. However, as the afterglow of this great war dims for some and is only a chapter in 11th grade history for most, we might truly say that we have reached "the end of history" as we approach the new millennium. As we move out of the shadow of World War II, it is incumbent upon us to create a new identity more consistent with what we need as a people and as educators. It is our responsibility to define for our children a new American common virtue based on rightful needs, not empty wants. There's an old Armenian proverb that says, "Hell is the condition in which we deny ourselves what we truly need because of the value we place on what we merely want."

Before we leave our present time and begin to think about a new identity, let us be clear about the full measure of devotion given by our fathers, mothers, siblings, and friends to the protection of our freedoms within a history of war and inside a warriors' culture. I honor their service as well as my own. But, as we approach the new millennium let us walk out from under the shadow of the last fifty years and into a new light. Like it or not, we will be forced to move on, much like our first parents, and teachers are being asked to lead the way. So, let us show some initiative, grace, and imagination and begin to understand our present identity and start to construct a new one. Let us continue to study war, but let it not study us. Let us honor the true warrior, but with metaphors that point ahead to conscience and enlightenment. And, let us imagine what the world might be and what we might become. To imagine the possibilities in all of us is to engrace us all.

I would like to encourage us to move toward grace, not with a new ethic, but by paying full attention to what Lincoln called our "better angels." That is, by paying attention to the best of the human family—the virtues of reason, compassion, quality, and love that point toward the high road of human exploration and possibilities.

How can we construct a new identity that will divert attention from the warrior who breaks things and kills people to the true warrior who builds and heals? How can we come to understand that the power of the mind is infinite while brawn is limited? And, how can we come to realize that an angry people will defeat themselves in battle as well as in life? The raw materials for this understanding and transformation are already within us, within the true warrior. What we must do, however, is to move from the honoring of death to the honoring of life.

Again, our present identity is rooted in our conception of war and the old notion of warrior placed within the unfolding of the years since the last great war took place. World War II and an uneasy postwar peace across the globe have shaped our world and our world view, even as educators. Understanding the last fifty years as a continuation of thought deeply rooted in war will help us identify our present character—a character shaped by technology; cold war; consumerism; race, class, and gender divisions; and a loss of meaning and purpose.

## Technology

From nuclear energy, to computers, to space travel, our technology has been driven by the context of World War II. Our technology has come in rapid spurts, often untested relative to consequences and environmental fit. The things we made (and still make) were constructed for reasons not often understood by citizens who had to be taught the benefits that came with doing military research and development. Such research and development was done ultimately, it was said, to enhance everyday life. Of course, the technology of war now invades our life and our consciousness, and has placed a linguistic net over our culture. The metaphors, tools, and models that we use are military in their essence. Our schools, for example, are organized around concepts like objective and line and staff, while our play is described in terms of "throwing the bomb" or using the "blitz." We cannot separate our language from our tools and we should recognize that our tools and much of our language were conceived and born in fire.

### Cold War

For the last fifty years our identity was shaped by a cold, and sometimes hot, war. This part of our identity grew out of our reactions to the Soviet Union and was held hostage by fear and greed. Our meaning as a people was often framed in terms of stopping communism, and we became an opposite image of our enemy, and often an image without essence. The cold war suggested that we were never quite good enough . . . in space technology, in our educational programs, and in the living of our lives.

### Consumerism

Within the afterglow of World War II we became an economy characterized by spending and consuming as opposed to a people practicing savings and production. Because of our world economic dominance we perhaps thought that our war victories also meant the continuation of economic victories out into the foreseeable future. Our parents and grandparents paid quite a price for these victories and we, their children, would now benefit and live the good lifestyle, defined now as the good consumers. But our war victories have not given us long-run economic victories. Today, we are in the fight of our life. International competition is glowing white hot, and all our anger will not make us number one. In fact, if we do not become better and smarter, and very soon, more than our lifestyles will be at risk.

### Class, Gender, Race

World War II accelerated our long journey out of the darkness of segregation. Because of the war and the enlightened vision of some leaders, progress toward a more just society was made. In 1954 and throughout the 1960s, legal and political victories were experienced, but the central controlling myth prevailed—the myth of group separation as a defining element in our national character. Separatists on all sides, with little knowledge of biology or history and with poor judgment, and even poorer policies, preached differences while the nation cried out for unity. The shadow of World War II, with its alliances, deadly campaigns, and bombings is still with us as the center now refuses to hold and we spin off into remote universes complete with private acts and myopic views of how the world should work. We have failed to understand the need and practice of negotiations between private acts and views and the public good and reality. For the most part, our students don't have a clue about their public responsibilities, nor do their parents. Make no mistake, our new armies today are found in our gangs of all stripes and colors. They are the epitome of separate alliances, deadly campaigns, and bombings.

## Divisions of Territory

The twentieth century concludes in much the same way it began—with the redrawing of maps. However, the new maps are not so much of geographic territory, but of landscapes depicting new and developing networks of finance, people, resources, and culture. Forces are dividing nations and people, while other forces are uniting them. But, it should be clear that the maps of the world of 1945 and of 1995 are different both in levels of abstraction and in how they address territory. Territory has become a process; a metaphor pointing to a different way of seeing the world. Unfortunately, our old identity is tied to the conceptions of region portrayed in our 1945 maps. But, as we struggle for new identities we must be able to transcend these notions of territory and engage new concepts of energy and place. The world is an immense network of ideas and goods that present and represent new patterns and relationships among people, and this fact demands the construction of new maps. The construction of these maps will require more aggressive teaching and deeper learning than at any other time in our history. Those not capable of and not willing to lead students toward content and discipline, as opposed to holding them back with empty process and feelings, commit egregious insult to the intellectual health of this country and profound disrespect of the abilities of American youth.

If we do not teach our children this new world definition; if we do not help our children to define their human selves and at the same time act globally; if we do not teach our children to critically discriminate between what is good and what is not; if we do not help our children develop intelligent behaviors; and if we do not teach them to establish and love their learning communities, then we will leave this generation in a rubble far greater than that of World War II. Our parents' legacy to us was the protection of territory. Our will and testament to our children must be written to include the protection and advancement of scholarship and citizenship.

## A New Identity

We are now at a point in time where we know that our old identity is inadequate and even dysfunctional. We seem to be driven only by extrinsic motivation and we feel a deep sense of fear, loneliness, and even incompetence. As we move between two economic epochs, our fundamental beliefs and institutions seem vacuous, and we feel the need for something better.

In many ways we are like the adolescent who will do anything, crazy or not, not to be embarrassed (disrespected). But embarrassment (not sin, not guilt) is what our present culture does to us and we do to ourselves. Advertisements, media, and even our very culture have few standards for us and for our children. In what do we believe? It's a fair question today. In "the home of the brave" and "the land of the free," we are neither. How free are we when many of us feel that we cannot even walk down our own streets at night? How brave are we when we fear our children so much that we refuse to develop in them the habits of rightful behavior—discipline, civility, and love of learning and community?

As we continue to expect less and less of our children, our new citizens, in our schools and in our homes, we simultaneously increase our tolerance for incompetence. Incompetent people mask their own fears with aggression, and our children are no different. Children who cannot read, who cannot write, who cannot reason, who do not know right from wrong, yet pass from grade to grade to assuage the poorly conceived, best intentions, of education policy makers, know instinctively the price of this schooling and understand intuitively that it does not add up to the value of an education. Disillusioned, they leave for the streets, and we become prisoners in our own homes. This condition, this lack of principles, is a manifestation of living in a time between the times . . . a time of ethical and institutional dislocations. And we are embarrassed because we know that things are not right. This embarrassment brings out a deep fear that is acted out in various forms of aggression. We fear each other and separate ourselves one by one, building physical and psychological walls around us. We live in virtual communities, alone and in terror. This terror, this aggression, and this fear comes fundamentally from incompetence. Not any incompetence, but the incompetence that comes from a lack of moral perspective that makes us question our abilities and judgment. To the degree that we feel we cannot do, know, or be, we are painted as inadequate and strike out in anger so our incompetence won't be discovered. It seems never to occur to us that aggression is the essence of incompetence, particularly moral incompetence.

Now we have come to the time when we need to construct a new identity; an identity built on a new conception of twenty-first century warriors who are both man and woman. We need to embrace a new competence. This new competence rests upon moral and intellectual fitness and affords us the opportunity to build communities, not destroy them. This new competence will include a love of scholarship and learning that will grow the individual, and through individual integrity the community will become better; and the beauty of all life will be enhanced. With competence, embarrassment will fade and perhaps, with it, also aggression. But, this logic depends upon our ability to teach and to learn. That is a shared duty among student, teacher, parent, and culture.

## Conclusion

Let's bring this home now to us, the educational leaders/teachers. I am convinced that you will lead the way into the new epoch. This is the case because the new economic epoch—one of electronics, information, bio-technology, and ethical strength—will be a learning place. The new economy will have the attributes of a good school. We must become better and smarter, and educators must accept this challenge for no one else is equipped for the task. You are the first of the new warriors. You are the first to see with both of your gender eyes, and have the perspective and courage of virtue. You will need this new strength as you are entering a new kind of battlefield where the landscape is unmapped and before you lies a new global arena where boundaries and alliances shift like the wind. But the world asks you to put aside timidity and join the battle for moral fitness and intellectual power. Our profession asks you to know and love your craft and ready yourselves for advancement. This is the only defense against aggression born out of embarrassment and incompetence. We must become the leaders in the pursuit of wisdom. That is, we must demonstrate the organic application of information, knowledge, and imagination to human dilemmas, desires, and dreams. This wisdom will unite us with our cultural heritage and give us the ability to find and build the moral framework upon which human life is defined and within which meaning resides. This is the task before us. This is the task in which we must engage. This is our common duty. And this is the price we must be willing to pay for life, liberty, and public happiness—for civilization, because we know the value of this place, this earth, this other Eden. Let us join together, then, and renew our work to secure the blessings of disciplined freedom for our children. Let us so love this republic, this jewel of history, that we will make of it a true home for those children and an inspiration to what all people can achieve. We few, we blessed few, we band of new warriors, let us so inspire our students, colleagues, and communities that when our children and their children look back to this time between the times they will say of us—"they so loved this land, their craft, and each other that they were able to give safe passage to liberty, justice, and integrity into the new millennium."

# 1998

# TOWARD A HUMANE WORLD: MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH SOCIAL STUDIES

*Tedd Levy*

Tedd Levy was a social studies teacher at Nathan Hale Middle School, Norwalk, Connecticut.

This presidential address was presented on November 20, 1998 to the 78th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Anaheim, California. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 63 (January/February 1999): 6-7, 62-64. ERIC Number: EJ 590 446.

# 1998

## Toward a Humane World: Making a Difference with Social Studies

*Tedd Levy*

For a classroom teacher to have this size of audience, with so many paying attention, is an awe-inspiring experience. But I will understand if you leave your seat, call out, or walk around. If you wish to go to the lavatories, please do so without raising your hand.

Since this is a new, one-time experience, I want to say first that I feel privileged to be here and honored to share some small association with truly outstanding social studies educators who have preceded me as NCSS presidents. Several are here to introduce speakers and I would like them to stand as their names are called: Don Schneider, Jean Craven, Bob Stahl, Todd Clark, Margit Maguire, Charlotte Anderson, Mary McFarland, Fred Risinger, Don Bragaw, James Banks, and Ted Kaltsounis.

I would also like to recognize immediate past presidents Pat Nickell and Rich Diem, who helped show the way, and president-elect Rick Theisen and vice president Susan Adler, who will follow.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to recognize a few people who have contributed to my professional career: First, I want to acknowledge and thank my wife Carol, who has always encouraged and supported my efforts, has tolerated late nights and lost weekends, and has always made the most important difference in my life. Thanks, too, to:

- Margaret Childs, my high school social studies teacher, for tolerating and motivating what, in retrospect, had to be an insufferable adolescent;
- Carl Bornhoff, a demanding and inspiring social studies scholar at Central Connecticut State College;

- Morris Gall, a gentle spirit, a knowledgeable and sensitive educator and author, and mentor to a stumbling new teacher in the Norwalk, Connecticut public schools;
- Irving Morrissett, a leader and promoter of social studies, who provided me and countless others with opportunities and challenges at the Social Science Education Consortium;
- and, most recently, thanks to my colleagues and friends in the Norwalk school system, who know better than others how little I have been there, and how much they have had to cover for me.

Special thanks, too, to my colleagues in the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies for tolerating and motivating what, in retrospect, had to be an insufferable aging adolescent.

I invite you to recognize and thank—in some way—your teachers, too.

How many of you are classroom teachers? How many are attending their first professional social studies conference?

Well, many of us share some common experiences as teachers. We know, for example, that the day after Halloween is not good for calm reflective thinking. We know that new students come from schools where nothing was taught. Good students move away.

We know that parents called to school to discuss their child's profanity invariably swear, too—just as parents who are called to school for their child's excessive tardiness are always late.

We know that the classroom clock is never right. The public address system always interrupts when you are about to make a key point. And fire drills usually occurring during tests.

We know that student knowledge is not always what we would like it to be.

You have come to this conference, I gather, to connect with like-minded professionals, see new materials, and learn new ideas and classroom activities. You have done this because you want to improve the education of young people. And I would like to suggest that our overall purpose is to help young people make competent and caring decisions for the common good.

As Henry Ford observed: "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success." You have made a beginning. I'm sure over the next few days you'll make progress. And success will come upon your return.

This morning, I plan to talk about the world and its people, as well as public education, social studies, and teachers.

First, the world today. As this century draws to a close, a quick review reveals that we have had to adjust to the effects of two world wars and many smaller ones, a devastating depression, genocide, the end of colonialism, the revival of national and ethnic identities, the re-emergence of religious fundamentalism, the concentration of economic power, and persisting inequities.

We have witnessed the defeat of fascism; the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union; the rise of China, Japan, Korea, and other Asian nations; the concern for environmental and population issues; the dramatic introduction of scientific and technological advances; and, in an increasingly interdependent world, the uneven but undeniable spread of democracy.

In our own country, while many have enjoyed great material abundance, we have seen poverty, drugs, crime and violence, and shifting social values that have strained personal relations and the family structure, and altered political attitudes and institutions. There has also been a continuing concern with civil and human rights. Many, regrettably, continue to live, as Thoreau observed, "lives of quiet desperation."

For many, the material quality of life has improved but the social quality of our lives remains strained. In large number, we remain ignorant, poor, prejudiced, selfish, alienated, or apathetic. And these ills of adults are suffered most by their children. As educators we have a daunting task, little appreciated by our critics.

At the same time, in the midst of this ever present disruption and destruction, a global society has truly emerged offering scientific and technological advances that require interdependence and promote the opportunity of a better life for all. "It is the first civilization," Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, observed, "that spans the entire globe and binds together all societies, submitting them to a common global destiny."

For many of the world's people, whose liberties are more an aspiration than a reality, this destiny is best measured by progress in human rights. But there are signs of hope. Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in December 1948, 50 years ago, much progress has been made.

Developed by more than 50 governments and hundreds of organizations in an effort headed by Eleanor Roosevelt, the Declaration states simply: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." During these 50 years, thousands of organizations devoted to protecting individual and group rights have emerged. Although not legally binding, the Universal Declaration has become the customary law of nations, cited in court decisions, written into constitutions, and used to guide foreign policy and international agreements. "Today," says U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, "those principles which have become the yardstick for measuring the degree of progress of societies are known and recognized by all the inhabitants of the globe."

In seeking to focus attention on this year's NCSS conference theme, "Toward a Humane World: Making a Difference with Social Studies," we asked several NCSS members which 20th century person best exemplifies the spirit of making this a humane world, and how can social studies educators make a difference in creating a more humane world? Who, in your opinion, is the 20th century person who best exemplifies the spirit of making this a more humane world?

Among the most frequently suggested individuals were Mother Teresa, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Many noted their commitment to others and their belief in nonviolence.

Several others were also suggested—Eleanor Roosevelt, John Muir, Rachel Carson, Winston Churchill, Dag Hammarskjöld, Robert Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, to name a few—and some common traits seem to emerge.

To be humane, whatever our loyalties or national, racial, religious, or ethnic background, is to recognize the worth of human life. Whatever our distance from others—geographic, economic, political—we are bound by common human abilities and challenges. The most humane men and women have a *vision* that cuts across barriers. They have *compassion* for their fellow human beings, *firm beliefs*, and the *courage* to champion a larger *cause*. They inspire the best in human beings and they are great *teachers*.

### What Is Our Challenge? How Do We Promote a More Humane World?

This information age, with its technically competent people, does not automatically produce citizens who think critically or value liberty and justice. It does not guarantee any concern for the common good or offer respect for the humanity and diversity of others. Throughout history, from the bronze age to the industrial age, and through the atomic age, space age, and information age, scientific and technological advances have brought as much grief as goodness. They have never guaranteed "the good life." And in the 21st century, even though science and technology will be vastly different, we won't be. So our task of educating competent and caring thinkers remains and takes on renewed urgency.

With travel, technology, and other ways of reaching people around the world, we need to encourage students to:

- welcome a connection to human beings the world over;
- function with sensitivity and alertness as inhabitants of a small planet;

- possess dispositions that foster respect for individual worth and human dignity;
- promote such qualities as peace, freedom, justice, and other democratic principles; and
- demonstrate a spirit of service.

Ultimately, the type of education we provide will shape the type of society we will have. As Gary Fenstermacher says:

> We hear a great deal about readying the next generation of workers for global competition, about being first in the world in such high status subjects as math and science, and about having world class standards for what is learned in school. We hear almost nothing about civic participation or building and maintaining democratic communities, whether these be neighborhoods or governments at the local, state, or federal level. . . . Not only does the current national reform movement . . . pay too little attention to the ideas and ideals of democracy, it pays far too little attention to the ideas and ideals of education.[1]

Citizenship education is, as some have called it, the phantom of the curriculum. Where does this leave us, the social studies educators in the nation's schools?

There can be no doubt that over the last decade or two, teachers have had to work with students who have changed. Schools today face a flood of social problems plaguing children: teenage pregnancy, adolescent drug and alcohol abuse, juvenile crime, violence, disruptive families, and poverty. Where we once taught basic skills, we are now often called on to meet children's basic needs.

- The number of children living in poverty has grown steadily and is now over 20 percent—more than double that of any other major industrialized nation.
- Nearly half of all African American children and over one-third of Hispanic children live in poverty in the United States.
- In 1990, 9 percent of all babies born in the country—360,000 children—had teenage mothers.
- Nearly 4,000 children are murdered each year.

It is easy to conclude that the problems most children face start, or are found, outside the school rather than inside; on the street rather than on the playground; in the living room rather than in the classroom. The problems that plague schools, especially city schools, are deeply rooted in poverty, unemployment, crime, racism, and human despair. Too often, teachers and administrators are asked to solve problems that the public and its leaders in statehouses and city halls have lacked the will and courage to tackle.

A writer for the Kettering Foundation, an organization that has long supported public education, recently explained that it might be helpful to think of the public schools as the canaries of public life.[2] You remember the old story: if you are in a mine, and the canary in the cage next to you stops singing, it is an early alarm that the air is poisoned.

When public life in a community is weak, the first place that weakness is likely to show up is in the public school system. And you cannot improve public schools by abandoning them for private ones. Public life is critical and yet as inconspicuous as the air we breathe. It would not be wise to spend a lot of time performing throat surgery on the canary. The problem is much bigger than the canary, and you won't be able to help the bird until you fix the much bigger problem. Similarly, we may not be able to have the schools we want until we have the kinds of communities we need.

For all their faults, schools seem destined to become social service centers that offer parenting classes, family counseling, and medical clinics in an effort to provide more healthy youngsters. These are the youngsters, of course, with whom we must work.

"Part of the problem," according to Laurence Steinberg, author of *Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do*, "is that we keep asking schools to fix what's wrong when it's beyond their capability. No curricular overhaul," he writes, "no instructional innovation, no change in school organization, no toughening of standards, no rethinking of teacher training or compensation will succeed if students do not come to school interested in, and committed to, learning."[3]

Steinberg's study, based on interviews and discussions with over 20,000 students and hundreds of parents, found that:

- Nearly 20 percent of all students surveyed said that they do not try as hard as they could in school because they worry about what their peers would think.
- Two-thirds of the students said they had cheated on a school test in the past year.
- Ninety percent said they had copied someone else's homework in the past year.
- The average American high school student spends four hours a week on homework outside school.
- Fifty percent of the students said they do not do homework.
- More than 40 percent of the parents never attend school programs.
- Nearly one-third of the students say their parents have no idea how they are doing in school.

If this study is accurate, no amount of school reform will work unless we recognize the solution is considerably more far-reaching and complicated than simply changing curricular standards, teaching methods or instructional materials.

In addition to these social issues, teachers are held accountable and evaluated as a result of factors of curriculum requirements and school organization over which they have little control. They rarely have a meaningful say in what is taught, how many students are taught, or how often or for how long they will conduct their classes. Materials are usually limited and commonly selected by someone else. It is extremely difficult to meet with colleagues to discuss student progress, instructional methods, or the academic program.

In almost every respect, rules and regulations governing a teacher's life within the school are arbitrarily pronounced by others outside the class or outside the school. And it goes without saying that when it comes to school reform, this is also done to teachers rather than with them.

There remains a great gap between elite policymakers on blue-ribbon committees and harried teachers in crowded classrooms, and until that gap narrows there will always be a need for educational reform.

## Why Insist on More and Better Social Studies?

The question is a fair one: Do we suffer from inadequate math and science and reading or from a confused social environment? The political and social contradictions speak for themselves:

- We explore space but don't walk through our neighborhood after dark;
- We export tobacco, knowing it causes cancer, but strive to halt its use here;
- We fight to save the lives of unborn babies, but seek to take the lives of criminals;
- We give tax breaks to corporations threatening to relocate, but withhold funds from individuals unable to find jobs;
- We have the most powerful weapons in history, but are most vulnerable to terrorism;
- We have more ways than ever to reach out, but we look past our neighbors, lock our doors, and keep to ourselves.

In this confused environment, it is only surprising that more and more people do not see a need for more and more social studies. Our society is going through yet another period of self-interest and neglect of the common good. Private interest, yes. Public interest, I can't be bothered.

As part of this pervasive attitude, social studies doesn't have the payoff that math or science or the computer-god has, and is therefore not even placed on the back burner. In many communities, it is off the stove. It is not a consumer or career driven discipline. There is not private gain. It is not that people don't understand the purpose, it is that they often don't agree or care about the purpose.

While these obstacles to advancing and improving social studies are rooted in indifference, there is also a vigorous, vocal, well-financed, well-organized assault on public education and social studies by a hard right conservative minority that seeks privatization for personal—and not the public—good. And they have been influential beyond their numbers and have shaped much of the discussion over educational reform.

The purposes and quality of social studies education will rise or fall with the existence of public education. The debate over vouchers, charter schools, standardized tests, teacher accountability, and all the other educational hot buttons has the potential for redefining "public" education. If the last remaining institution that accepts all members of our society, and exists only for the altruistic purpose of improving the society, gives way to private enterprises with narrow religious, racial, or class interests, we will have gone a long way toward changing the basic nature of our social compact. The glue of common good will have hardened and cracked in a spasm of self-interest.

The effort to dismantle public education is an assault on the common good. As community-minded educators, we shoulder the burden of a great responsibility. Our noble efforts can truly make a difference for the future of our society. The one institution in our society with a mission to improve that future is education. The one part of that education system most responsible for citizenship, and our future, is social studies education. The one person who can most make a difference is a caring adult—you, the teacher.

Our mission is to make that difference: to educate competent and caring human beings for a diverse and democratic society in an interdependent world.

## Notes

1. Cited in R. Soder, ed., *Democracy, Education and the Schools* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996).

2. David A. Smith, "When the Canary Stops Singing: Public Life and the Health of Public Schools," *Connections* (June 1997).

3. Laurence Steinberg, *Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

# 1999

# SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION: A CHALLENGE, A CHOICE, A COMMITMENT

*Richard Theisen*

**Richard Theisen was a social studies teacher at Osseo High School in Osseo, Minnesota.**

**This presidential address was presented on November 19, 1999 to the 79th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at Orlando, Florida. It was published initially in *Social Education*, Volume 64 (January/February 2000): 6-7, 63-64. ERIC Number: EJ 620 640.**

# 1999

## Social Studies Education: A Challenge, A Choice, A Commitment

*Richard Theisen*

Before I begin my planned address this evening, I want to take a moment to comment on the Civic Assessment results which were released on Thursday, November 18, by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The assessment was based on multiple choice and directed response questions in these areas: civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions, or "habits of the heart," as de Tocqueville called them.

The overall performance of students in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades clearly indicates that there is room for significant improvement. Unfortunately, many of our current students will have graduated before widespread changes in course content, pedagogy, and staff development can be fully implemented. The results suggest that many students do not fully understand or value the core qualities of a democracy. Judge Learned Hand's comment earlier in this century is particularly relevant. He stated, "I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men/women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it."

The good news is that the assessment results do not completely reflect the recent effort most states have made to significantly raise the standards in civic education. When the next assessment occurs in five years, the standards will have been fully implemented and scores should improve. More importantly, the NAEP Civics Report will encourage a national dialogue on the nature and value of civic education. The content of civics courses will change as well as the teaching strategies. It is an opportunity to focus attention and support on one of the most significant aspects of public education.

The task of addressing the limitations in civics education will not be easy because the scores, in past, reflect the cynicism and lack of political efficacy among our adult population. However, it is a task we as a nation ignore at our own peril.

### The Quality of Education

The challenge for you and me is to help every child we teach reach his or her potential. As Michael Hartoonian, a past NCSS president, suggests, we need to help them "become producers, not just consumers in our schools. The end result of an education isn't just to make you better off but to make you better. In the end, our wealth is what we can be, do, and know, not what we own or possess."

The task facing social studies education today is multifaceted. A song sung often during the sixties, "Where Have All The Flowers Gone?", has some relevance in this setting. The song in many ways had a literal meaning during the Vietnam War, but it also has some application to social studies in a figurative sense as we end the twentieth century. If we do not reinvigorate the content knowledge and pedagogy of the young coming into the field, it may have a literal interpretation as well. The field needs to flower again much as it did in the sixties and seventies.

The leaders from the New Social Studies, as it was called at that time, are nearing the end of their prolific careers. They left their mark on social studies education, and defined what they thought the proper role of social studies ought to be in our society. The structure, content, and pedagogy of their curriculum projects were remarkably different from the curriculum of the forties and fifties – the time when those of you my age were on the other side of the desk in our nation's classrooms. The content options for students were significantly modified. The academic basis for social studies courses was broadened to include all of the social sciences. For some, this was a radical restructuring, since it meant that even the names of departments had to change in some instances.

The controversy over the definition of social studies is not a settled issue even today. However, the definition has been broadened significantly to include the behavioral sciences and other areas, often to the dismay of some of our colleagues who teach history and geography. The value of the ferment of the sixties and early seventies was the creativity and government support it spawned. New teachers like myself were able to participate first hand in the excitement of curriculum development. I remember well the intensity of my participation in a four-week summer program entitled "Teaching Controversial Issues," which was based on the curriculum work of Jim Shaver and his colleagues at Utah State University.

There were numerous opportunities for young and not so young classroom teachers to participate in staff development that had real substance and meaning. But this required a habit of the mind that too many of our colleagues in the classrooms across the country simply did not have time to develop. More specifically, they did not have the time to ask, why am I doing this activity, how does it fit into class objectives or goals, and what will it do to address the citizenship goals that are the core reason for our existence?

When you are doing "900 shows a year," an issue Stuart Polansky addresses in a book with that same title, questions of why and other philosophical questions get very short shrift for very practical reasons, most of which relate to school system structure and community value systems. School systems are slowly beginning to acknowledge that time to plan, to reflect, to revise, to collaborate with colleagues, to ask the "why are we doing this?" questions is just as important to quality education as is actual student contact. This movement must be encouraged. The quality of the education students receive is influenced more by this factor than virtually any other.

Curriculum projects such as "Man: A Course of Study," the "Taba Curriculum Project," the "Analysis of Public Issues Program," "Exploring Human Nature," and many others that I have not mentioned were exciting for a new teacher, which leads to my reason for this focus on the past. We have a change rolling through the ranks of the teaching professional which is historically unique—a wholesale turnover of personnel in K-12 classrooms. Some of you with a twinkle in your eye will be moving on to another part of your life next year, others have already done so, and many will be retiring in the near future. We must find a way to provide new teachers in social studies classrooms the exciting options and intellectual challenges we had when we began teaching. We must feed the natural optimism of our young colleagues. They are not as patient as we were and will not tolerate the inflexible structure, unwarranted criticism, and low pay we have endured. Nor should they.

We must find ways to improve pre-service education. Comprehensive certificates which entitle teachers to teach all social studies courses must be seriously reconsidered. Teachers cannot teach what they do not know. We know that is true, and so do our students. For example, an introductory course in micro and/or macro economics does not qualify one to teach an economics course. I know because at one time I was in that position. Trying to teach the difference between the concepts of a change in quantity demanded and a change in demand is always difficult. Fortunately for me, I had a bright young teacher down the hall with a major in economics who was extremely helpful; but not before I had utterly confused my class.

Perhaps it is time to consider certification by discipline or even a liberal arts degree with a major in the social sciences as a requirement for entry into our profession. However, that is for the future, the very near future I hope. Today we need to address the needs of our colleagues in the field.

If we want quality social studies education, we must have three significant changes in the system. First, summer study programs similar to those provided by the Education Professional Development Act of the late sixties and early seventies must be reinstituted. This would provide our younger colleagues already in the classrooms with the same opportunities we had. They deserve no less.

Second, we must change the factory style structure of our schools. Currently, for all practical purposes, the only behavior recognized contractually is student contact time. Time to reflect and revise or collaborate with colleagues is seldom recognized in teacher contracts. Instead, we collaborate over lunch breaks or after students have left for the day when our minds are tired and our energy is depleted. We cannot do our best unless teaching schedules and structures are changed. Even from a basic human health perspective, our current schedules are absurd. All of you who are classroom teachers know what I am talking about. The factory model which is being used is incompatible with the concept of educational excellence.

Third, we have to find a way to restore some civility to the dialogue about education issues. Actually, we need to move the discussion from the current monologue by ideologues with political agendas to genuine conversation where active listening is valued. Harsh, strident criticism of educators has done little to improve the quality of education. It has, however, been very effective in undermining and destroying teacher morale.

There are other significant needs that must be addressed and I am confident they will be. There is, after all, a certain cyclical nature to all of this, whether you look back to John Dewey, Harold Rugg, or the "New Social Studies" of the late sixties. Educational change occurs, critics heave unrelenting criticism, and it is followed once more by educational change, usually in that order. Fortunately, it is hard to destroy the idealism and optimism of educators.

Social studies teachers are active participants in defining a society's common good. They are on the cusp of social change. Working with young minds provides the opportunity and responsibility for human growth. The growth of young minds is feared by those who are locked in the past, while it is nurtured by those of us who believe in the ultimate value and good will of our youth. The dialogue about whether we ought to conserve and pass on only the traditions and content of the past, or focus on John

Dewey's and Harold Rugg's concepts of education, is always controversial. But the controversy will not turn the clock back to the good old days. It will not stop the change in values, traditions, and perspective that will inexorably occur.

The only real questions are how fast change will occur and how we will adapt while maintaining core principles: core principles like those embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I recently purchased a children's book entitled "A Children's Version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" that captured the essence of those principles. I was struck by the simple yet powerfully illustrated adaptation of the principles, particularly the statement that "people have duties toward the place where they live and toward other people who live there with them." We must work as teachers to ensure that principles like this are not lost as we race into the future.

When Harold Rugg, one of the early activists in NCSS, developed and published textbooks which encouraged critical evaluation of public policy issues and, more importantly, discouraged unthinking acceptance of authority, he was harshly criticized and his books eventually were removed from schools and taken off lists from which purchases could be made. "Man: A Course of Study" received a somewhat similar treatment in the seventies. The national history standards controversy of the recent past is another example of what can happen when social studies critics decide to attack what they perceive as wrong-headed attempts to teach social studies to their children. Unfortunately, it is also true that in the past many of these attacks were filled with inflammatory rhetoric, personal political agendas, or purposeful misstatements of reality. Honest, open dialogue on real issues was generally not the goal of critics. And, in some instances, a scorched earth policy of destruction with little regard for truth and reality occurred.

These are episodes from our past we would perhaps like to forget. I list them because I believe that in some ways we have met the enemy and he is us. We as an organization of social studies teachers must engage critics in constructive dialogue about substantive issues. We can no longer turn the other cheek and politely concede the arena of public opinion to our critics. We put ourselves in serious peril if we continue this posture. NCSS will soon be engaging in a significant public relations program. We must become proactive and vigorously promote social studies education.

As social studies teachers, we are especially qualified to defend our work when it is wrongfully criticized. Misstatements, or false charges which are not answered, tend to become realities in the minds of those who hear them. Those who represent us, whether they be subject matter organizations or teacher unions, must not only be proactive but reactive. The record must be set straight when people and foundations use their public office, media position, or academic status to search out and destroy public education rather than engage in constructive dialogue.

Young teachers too often leave the field after four years, and I can understand why they do. They cite salary, working conditions, lack of control over decisions that affect their teaching, and lack of respect as prime reasons for their decision. If we want to attract the best and brightest, and keep them in the classroom, we need to do a number of things, but one certainly is to stand and be counted when public education is attacked and teachers are scapegoated. We as social studies teachers know what to do in those circumstances and how to do it. We teach history, we teach civics, we teach social studies as an examination of public policy issues. We encourage students to develop and defend positions on public policy and controversial issues. We do not teach them to avoid conflict or to seek it, but to address it as it occurs. We need to practice what we teach and I know we can do it.

### The Means of Education

We have an important role as social studies teachers in helping students define the common good and we need the teaching materials that will make it possible. Now, it is certainly true that electronic communication has opened a door behind which riches beyond belief exist for classroom teachers, but several issues still need to be addressed. Access to limitless information which can be used in the classroom still requires the skill to decide what to use, a skill pre-service teachers are hopefully being taught. It also requires the time to examine the vast array of materials and translate them into usable classroom materials that incorporate the standards we are expected to teach and that are compatible with the pedagogy that we know and use.

Certainly at the elementary level, where teachers have to teach all the subjects, and also at the secondary level, major publishers are very influential. Textbooks are still widely used. They have improved from the bland, pictureless products I read as a K-12 student, but too often the changes are superficial. Substance is too often shallow, case studies are not used often enough, creative use of materials is seldom suggested in the activities section, and perhaps most seriously, textbook content reflects the perspectives of conservative censors—and occasionally liberal ones too. How else would you explain the fact that a recently published American government textbook chose to put a detailed reference to the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court case in a footnote of approximately five lines in small print at the bottom of the page. That 1972 Supreme Court decision on abortion is one of the most contentious decisions of this century and deserves appropriate coverage. I have taught constitutional law as an elective class for quite some time, and to have that case hidden in the footnotes clearly suggests the censors have been successful. We are not the only victims. Our science colleagues from Kansas have their own recent case of censorship.

Perhaps we ought to teach pre-service teachers not to use textbooks, but rather, to develop their own materials. This is not meant to be a facetious suggestion, at least not for secondary social studies teachers. Elementary teachers really do not have that option or, if they do, it is extremely time consuming given their teaching load. Frankly, I think the only answer to this situation in the long run is to find a way to free ourselves from the controls of textbook adoption states, since publishers respond to the supply and demand forces that those states represent. Another more realistic option is to increase the influence of NCSS on the publishers of social studies textbooks. Our national standards are certainly one example of the impact we can have.

If we want to play a role as teachers in helping students define the common good, we need to insist that staff development for social studies teachers contain a significant exposure to the content we are teaching. If we teach courses with a political science emphasis, we ought to have staff development which features the governor of the state or the chief law enforcement officer, or the editor of a local newspaper. If we teach economics, a seminar with a staff member from the Federal Reserve or the chief economic officer from one of the local corporations would be very useful. The examples are endless. We need to have an ongoing dialogue with the practitioners in the fields, and not just with those who match our politics. The dialogue would give us a growth experience that would quickly be transferred to the classroom. Beyond that, it has an effect that is similar to that which one experiences when one has the extended responsibility of taking care of one's child while one's spouse is at work. You love your children but you do develop a hunger for conversation with an adult. Similarly, we are dedicated to our students, but we need the intellectual stimulation that practitioners in the field can provide.

As a first year teacher in 1966, I was committed to the concept that quantitative evaluation of my impact on student knowledge and skill development was essential. In fact, I was frustrated that the same cause and effect relationships that I had studied as a chemistry major were so hard to determine in social studies. Test validity and reliability (in other words, does my test actually measure what I taught and is it free of bias?) were very important. They still are, but I am now convinced that the precision I was seeking was unrealistic and not unlike the situation in the field of economics, where attempts to precisely quantify relationships have been emphasized excessively. The precision the pure sciences provide cannot be replicated in student assessment. Human behavior is too variable. We can test and measure, but we must always identify the limitations of our test instruments.

In many respects, student assessment has become an obsession in this country. Critics of public education and social studies often do not see assessment as a tool to improve education. Too often, they selectively use the results as verification of their preconceived position that educators are lazy, incompetent, or controlled by their union–positions which, incidentally, are not supported by the annual Gallup Poll survey question that asks parents to grade the schools their children attend. Much has been written about the misuse of testing and assessment by a wide variety of people. We teachers need to read it, in order to better understand the strengths and limitations of the assessments being used. We need to have a better understanding that enables us to differentiate between politically motivated misinterpretations of results and interpretations that help us identify the strengths and weaknesses of our teaching. Experts such as David Berliner, Gerald Bracey, Peter Shrag, and Richard Rothstein have written extensively on the topic.

Social studies teachers must participate in the test development process. The activities of the Michigan Council for the Social Studies are an example of social studies teachers organizing and bringing their professional expertise to bear on the type, style, and substance of tests that are given to measure the social studies knowledge of students. We should use their experience as a model.

Student assessment is often a "Catch 22" situation for social studies educators. If student knowledge in social studies is not assessed at the state or national level, we are not given serious considerations when state and federal funding initiatives are being considered. However, if those tests are high stakes tests with every district's performance printed in the local newspaper, they end up receiving an inordinate amount of time in the classroom. And when that happens, the concept of local control of the curriculum is lost. The tests will drive the curriculum. In addition, the style of test has a high impact on the teaching strategies that are used. In my more cynical moments, I begin to wonder if the goal of this type of testing in reality is to place a straitjacket on the creativity of teaching. I do know that one quality seriously missing in this entire area is trust.

Finally, if student performance on tests is also used to determine teacher salaries, the stakes have been increased. This is being done in limited form in Denver and Minneapolis; in other areas, such as Florida, it is state mandated. Too often, cause and effect relationships, student motivation, local conditions, economic class, and other variables are not controlled when testing is used for this purpose. If an instrument can be developed which can accurately, with all variables controlled, measure the effectiveness of teachers, we would support it.

If social studies teachers want to be participants instead of observers in those decisions that affect social studies education, we need to encourage our new teachers and experienced colleagues to be activists in our state and national organizations—not just members, but members who act on their ideas to improve social studies education. The publications, conferences, and national leadership this organization provides are examples of the work of activists in the field who care about the direction social studies education is taking. It doesn't take wealth, influence or perfect knowledge to be a leader. Nor is it a requirement that you be a supervisor or college teacher. In fact, I believe our success in the future depends on K-12 classroom teachers stepping forward and doing their share of the national leadership. We can no longer defer to our department chairs, district resource teachers, or college educators. They have done an excellent job and are certainly committed to social studies education. More K-12 classroom teachers need to become candidates for the NCSS Board of Directors and to run for the presidency of NCSS. We have only had five K-12 NCSS presidents in the entire history of this organization. K-12 teachers also need to become the chairpersons of committees and play other leadership roles here and at the affiliate level. We are all pursuing the same goal—providing the best social studies education we can to the young people we teach. When classroom teachers do not pursue these leadership positions we lose the benefit of their talent and expertise.

I would like to end my comments with a reference to a topic near and dear to my heart as a social studies teacher—citizenship education. As a teacher who has taught courses on citizenship, one of the questions I have had to face is how to address the layers of cynicism and lack of political efficacy that exist in this country. Social studies bears the prime responsibility for preparing politically efficacious citizens. Teaching traits of good citizenship will not alone make it happen. However, practicing it in our classroom, school, and community is one way of addressing the issue of political efficacy—the belief that what you do will make a difference. The NCSS guidelines on student government are one example of what we can do to address this issue. There are numerous other examples of effective citizenship education in this country. The NCSS Board is currently considering a broad-based initiative which will address the whole area of civic education.

Civic education is always an interesting challenge. I recall team teaching with two of my colleagues. Our three classes operated as a community within the larger school community. We had developed all the components that an effective community would need, including a newspaper, governing body, and the essential political action skills. We were moving along nicely until one day our principal appeared at our door out of breath and quite frantic. He explained to us that the superintendent had angrily called him and asked just who had taught students that it was appropriate to walk into his office, demand to have a meeting with him, and then threaten to vandalize the boys bathroom on the second floor if he didn't arrange to have an outside area set aside for student smokers. Well, yes, we knew the student, and yes, we knew he was working on this community project; but, no, we had not given him this fairly radical and counterproductive advice. The principal was satisfied that we would take care of the problem and life went on. The teaching strategy we used was successful, even if fairly high risk in nature, since student behavior is never entirely predictable.

I think more of us need to creatively engage in challenging and sometimes controversial civic education. We also need to make connections with our local city councils, school boards, and other governmental institutions. We can work with those bodies, as my colleague Don Skoglund and other teachers across the nation have, to actually engage students in the process of government. They can be ex officio members of these governmental bodies and, in some instances, voting members. We ultimately want to teach the concept that participation is not a privilege but a duty. Voting is only the very smallest part of that responsibility. A healthy democracy requires participation in the civic life of the community, whether it be school, neighborhood, or the larger society.

I will close by thanking and recognizing each of you for the work you do with young hearts and minds around this country. Teaching is a noble profession. And teaching social studies involves an immense responsibility, which results in an equally significant sense of accomplishment when it is done well. We have an important mission, the education of children and young adults for citizenship in this country. Each social studies educator in this audience deserves recognition for the enthusiasm, idealism, and commitment that you bring to your work each day. I salute you and the many talents and skills you bring to your classrooms. I also salute you for the caring hearts you bring and share. Thank you.

# 2000

# CREATING PUBLIC SPACES IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

*Susan Adler*

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**This presidential address was presented on November 17, 2000 to the 80th Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies at San Antonio, Texas. It was published initially in *Social Education,* Volume 65 (January/February 2001): 6-7, 68-71.**

# 2000

## Creating Public Spaces in the Social Studies Classroom

*Susan Adler*

My remarks this morning are intended to accomplish two things. The first is to give a very brief overview of some of the major initiatives NCSS has undertaken this year. My second goal is to share with you some of my thoughts (and dreams) about social studies in the 21st century.

### Four Major NCSS Initiatives

First, I'd like to make a few remarks about four major initiatives that are in process right now. The first is a Governance Task Force, chaired by Carol Marquis. The idea for this Task Force came about as we started asking how the organization might more efficiently and effectively serve our members and social studies education. What emerged was the understanding that we cannot simply tinker with the way we do business. Rather, we must address questions about our vision and what it would take to move us toward that vision. The work of the Task Force has begun with information gathering-feedback from and to members. The work will be spread out over two fiscal years and will inform the Board's strategic planning in February and beyond.

A second initiative is a partnership with WGBH (Boston Public Television) and Annenberg/CPB. This project will result in the production of a social studies video library which will showcase classrooms that exemplify our curriculum standards and powerful teaching. This library will be available for use with preservice and inservice teachers (in courses and workshops, for example). Judging from the work I've seen from similar math and science projects, this promises to be an excellent collection.

A third major initiative is the Citizenship Education Task Force co-chaired by Diane Hart and John Minkler. The work of the Task Force is a

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significant way in which we, as an organization, can re-examine what citizenship education ought to be about in the contexts of the 21st century. It seems to me that this work goes to the core of our organizational "soul."

Finally, I should mention our public relations campaign, which is aimed at promoting social studies and the importance of social studies. Our website, and, in fact, much of our communication features the slogan "Today's Social Studies: Creating Effective Citizens." But for the public relations effort to be effective and for the slogan to be meaningful, we depend on all of you. Each of us, talking about the importance of social studies, telling our success stories, can have far more impact than what the officers and staff alone can have. And, of course, each of us, thinking about what "effective citizenship" means to our teaching, can help to make a difference.

This last segues nicely into the second part of my talk. I'd like to spend the remainder of my time this morning sharing my dreams for social studies classrooms and curriculum built around a conception of citizenship and the common good. I'd like to talk about classrooms that are not only places of learning, but places which are caring, participatory and socially just. And I'd like to invite you to share my dreams, which are realities in many classrooms, in many places.

## Looking to the Future

The theme of our conference this year is "Honoring the Past: Building the Future." The turn of our calendars from 1999 to 2000 has led many of us to consider where we've been, where we are and where we should go. As social studies educators, we know that the past can inform our understanding of the present and help shape our decisions for the future. The past can be instructive; but we also have to remember that the future is not inevitable.

What can we learn from the 20th century? What are the lessons we can learn as we help to shape a future? The accomplishments of the 20th century are mixed. One might argue that great strides have been made over the past century. It was, for example, a century that started with air flight and continued with space exploration. Today, many ordinary people can travel to almost any part of the globe (although not always comfortably). Life expectancy has increased in many places and the sick have more resources and procedures to support them. More children receive more schooling. More families live in comfort and cleanliness. We can talk to friends and colleagues around the world quickly, easily and cheaply.

But we can't ignore the whole of the story. What a century: two world wars, holocausts that terrify the mind, diseases that spread with mind-boggling swiftness. And as some of us have grown richer, most of the world's inhabitants have not: hunger, disease and poverty are not strangers in our world, even here at home. Yes, there have been advances in technology, but that's not always a good thing. Just think of Hiroshima, or Three Mile Island, or the Gulf War (from the point of view of Iraqi civilians). Yes, many of us can travel faster and farther. And few of us would want to give up the ability to communicate instantaneously with friends and colleagues in distant places. But with rapid transportation and communication come increasing global corporatization and homogenization. The seeming Americanization of everywhere may be comfortable for Americans—but is it good for the globe?

What are the lessons we might learn from the past century as we think about our future? Elie Weisel suggests one lesson through a little anecdote: Imagine two men lost in the woods. The two are each alone, unaware of the other. The woods are thick and no way out is obvious. It's a dangerous place, full of unknown terrors. After wandering for hours, distraught and alone, the men meet. The first man exclaims, "I'm so glad to see you; I can't find my way. Do you know the way out?" The second man replies, 'Sorry, no. But I just came from that direction,' he says pointing behind him. "Don't go there."

Don't go there. Weisel cautions us to avoid authoritarianism and, importantly, to avoid unthinking acceptance of a social order. But, of course, there are also accomplishments to build on and people to learn from. Even in remembering the Holocaust, the other events of horror and genocide, there are stories of overwhelming courage, of struggles toward justice, of seemingly ordinary people who stood up against evil. The stories, and the lessons, of the 20th century are mixed: horror and compassion, social inequities and struggles for justice, Adolf Hitler and Eleanor Roosevelt. As we find our way into the 21st century, we won't go there again. Whatever way we go, it won't be back. Let's honor the past by building a future that is a better way. Let us think about how we might build a future in which justice and human compassion triumph over authoritarianism and hate. The lessons of the past are mixed; the future is still a possibility. Dreams do have a place.

What, then, are the challenges we face as educators, and especially as social studies educators? Looking back, we see that the development of the public school in the U.S. has been about creating an institution for social order, stability and the status quo. But it has also been about educating all children, preparing them to be thoughtful, principled participants in a democratic society.

In social studies we take the charge of preparing citizens for a democratic society as our special emphasis. When I was a child, we got citizenship grades on our report cards. That really was a grade for behavior, or what my teachers would have called deportment. I was a good citizen, by the way, except in second grade. And to this day, I don't know why my citizenship skills appeared, at least to my teacher, to have faltered when I was seven. I do know that the citizenship we speak about in social studies is something different. It is about the notion that citizens in a democracy should be thoughtful, able to make informed decisions, and willing to deliberate with others in open-minded ways. As we look to the future, we, as educators, must continue to choose which image will guide our teaching: the compliant citizen or the deliberative one? What is "civic virtue" in the 21st century and how do we nurture and develop it? And what does "civic virtue" have to do with day-to-day teaching?

In daily classroom lives, a notion of "civic virtue" may not, on the surface, influence teaching. We're concerned with the daily cares of organizing instruction for diverse learners, with engaging students in the content under study, with keeping order so that learning can really happen. As I travel to state meetings, I listen to teachers talk about accountability and assessment and how the ways in which those issues currently manifest themselves often inhibit good teaching and real learning. These things appear to have little to do with "civic virtue."

Teachers continue to wonder how much school can and should do. They wonder, for example, about changing family structures, about whether kids are in loving homes (whether traditionally structured or not), about whether care is given or absent. We wonder who is teaching kids values and what is the school's role in building strong values. And whose values are they anyway? I listen to teachers talk about technology—how it has increased access to knowledge for some, but not yet for all. And how it has also increased access to hate and ignorance. How do we help kids grow and make informed choices in a knowledge-intensive society?

All of these things are important, and they are connected to questions of "civic virtue." I keep returning to the core of our work as social studies educators—enabling kids to be citizens in a democratic society. I use the word "citizen" and "civic virtue" broadly. I am referring to the rights and responsibilities of all of us to think critically, to participate thoughtfully in society, and to interact with one another, in open and respectful ways, in order to make decisions that affect the broader community.

This last point is crucial—the need for people in a democratic society to interact with one another, across the differences of who we are as individuals, in order to make decisions that affect all, or most, of us. When was the last time you talked with people outside your usual circle? Have you talked, really talked, to the custodian in your building? What about the kids in your school—I mean really listening? Frequent interactions among diverse groups of people are crucial to our civic life, crucial to the development of trust, crucial to decision-making that goes beyond self-interest. It is because of this need to interact with "different" others that I look with concern at the loss of our "public" spaces and, as I shall argue, our shrinking concern with a "public good."

## Public Spaces and the Public Good

Let me talk first about "public spaces" and then return to the idea of "public good"; finally, I'll come back to the idea of classrooms that are educative, caring, participatory, and socially just. Living in cul-de-sacs and behind closed doors, watching pay-per view movies, we can avoid strangers. Put your debit card in the ATM or gasoline pump and forget the chit-chat with the clerk. And when was the last time you called a customer service line and got a human being? Technology has made our day-to-day interactions speedy and efficient, but also impersonal and mechanical. With the contraction of public spaces, we don't have to interact very much with strangers, with people who might be very different from ourselves.

I learned about "public spaces" as a child growing up in the Bronx. We were freer then, perhaps, to run and play in the neighborhood without fear of violence. And while our parents may not have been directly supervising or watching out for us at all times, there were eyes on the street, kind strangers keeping watch. Garry Marshall dedicated a column in a magazine called *Back in the Bronx* to thanking the people who helped make his childhood special—his parents, teachers, and neighbors. "And finally," he wrote, "thanks to the 'Get Off There People' who when you climbed on a tree or a fence or a car or a wall, yelled 'Get off there, you'll break your neck.' We seem to have changed from a 'get off there world' to a 'who cares, let them break their neck world.' I hope the 'get off there' people come back to the Bronx and everywhere."

Louis Duiguid, a columnist for the *Kansas City Star*, expressed a similar sentiment from a modern-day, Midwestern perspective when he wrote in a column last summer (August 23, 2000): "We need to shed our cocoons and extend kindness to others. It has to be so commonplace that it will counter the perception of meanness, renew our faith in democracy, and restore people's faith in our republic and in others." Acts of kindness renewing our faith in democracy! That's not really far-fetched. Isolated individuals don't care if someone else's kid breaks her neck, or doesn't go to a very good school. Acts of kindness to strangers are a way to connect to others. In this way, acts of kindness contribute to a sense of the 'common good.'

My concern with the shrinking of public spaces reflects my concern not simply with "space," literally thought of, but with a diminished concern for the "common good." When I refer to a "common good," I'm referring to a shared commitment to the civic health and life of the community (whether neighborhood, nation or globe). Robert Putnam, in his book *Bowling Alone*, documents a steady decline in membership in community organizations in the United States.[1] Even memberships in social groups, such as bowling leagues, have declined. People are still bowling, but not as league members. (They are "bowling alone.") Why does this matter? Such social groups, Putnam argues, are important because they bring together a mixed group of people around some common interest. Unlike Internet chat rooms, for example, people in face-to-face groups are likely to talk about a lot of other things beyond the particular shared interest that brought them together. Putnam goes on to argue that the decrease of interaction with a variety of others can and has resulted in a shrinking of "social capital"—the social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trust which arise from them. "Civic virtue," argues Putnam, "is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations."[2] He goes on to document steep declines in civic engagement and social trust.

Putnam is not making the argument for social groups that have tight bonds among their members, but are exclusionary to those outside the group. His argument has to do with the importance of broad social interactions and what he calls "social bridging." Civic engagement requires a sense of mutual obligation, a sense that there is a "public good," something beyond our individual self-interest. Trust and reciprocity help us to move beyond limited self-interest, to an understanding that one's own well-being is affected by the well-being of others. Trust and reciprocity can enable us to act in egalitarian and caring ways that further the interests of the entire community. Trust and reciprocity enable strangers to care whether children are about to break their necks.

Traditionally, democracy in America has placed high value on the rights and freedoms of the individual—freedom of speech, religion, movement and so forth. Part of the American belief system is the belief that each individual has the right to develop to his or her fullest potential. As we look back we can see that at least some of our history is the story of the struggle to assure that each individual has the opportunity for such development.

But this conception of democracy is not the whole story. We also hold a conception of democracy that defines democracy as more than individual liberties, more than a form of government. In this other, and sometimes competing, conception, democracy is defined as a way of living together. It is seen as a mode of interpersonal relations—of connections with others.

It is a sense of responsibility to the whole—to the common good. Democracy, from this perspective, requires a sense of expanded identity—beyond the personal self to the greater whole. It is this participatory democracy to which social studies has made a commitment – that learners should be educated so that they might participate in the decision making process of civic society. In NCSS position statements, for example, citizenship is defined by a willingness to engage in civil debate and to work for public policies that serve the common good. That is not to say we should sacrifice the individual to the common good; but we also cannot sacrifice the common good to a worship of the individual. The challenge is to find balance in ways that further the interests of the community as a whole.

I'd like to illustrate this idea with another anecdote I heard Elie Weisel tell. Imagine a crowd of people on a boat. All of them have bought their tickets, paid their money for a bit of space on that boat. One of the passengers is at his seat below deck. He has a pick and he's hammering away at the hull. "You can't do that," shout the passengers around him. "Are you crazy, of course I can," he replies. "Leave me alone, I paid for my seat." Well, what he fails to see is that, in fact, we're all in the same boat—we can all drown. If we don't balance our concern for the protection of individual liberty with a concern for the common good, we will all lose. Our individual liberty is threatened when we lose public spaces and when we fail to think about a "public good." We may be free to choose a car, but not public transportation; free to choose a school, but not to ensure that tomorrow's citizens are well-educated. Individual choice, without a concern for the public good, is barely a choice at all.

What has this all to do with teaching social studies day-to-day? As social studies educators we should keep in mind that we learn to be democratic in situations of interaction—not just by reading about it in a book. I have argued that democracy is not simply a form of governance—but a way of living. Democracy is about how we interact with others. It is about egalitarian and caring actions and interactions that further the interests of the entire community. Teaching for democracy means fostering principled relationships—among students, between students and teachers, between school and community. It means fostering relationships among diverse, heterogeneous groups. It means enabling youth to struggle together to solve public problems.

## The Qualities of a Democratic Education

Jeanne Oakes and her co-authors, in a book called *Becoming Good American Schools*, argue that education for democracy is education that is educative, caring, socially just and participatory.[3] I'd like to borrow these ideas and apply them specifically to social studies classrooms. I'd like to challenge us to think about ways to create classrooms and curriculum that aim toward these goals: educative, caring, participatory and socially just.

Classrooms that are educative are places of learning. Such classrooms enable learners to become informed and to develop the habit of staying informed. By informed, I don't simply mean kids should "learn" (too often memorize) a list of facts. The information we expect our students to learn should be embedded in conceptual understandings. Educative classrooms would have learners ask: "Whose knowledge?" "Whose point of view?" With these questions, learners can approach information with open minds, with a healthy skepticism that seeks to learn all sides of a story or of an issue.

Along with open-mindedness we would strive to develop the skills of disciplined intelligence. In educative classrooms, students would develop sophisticated thinking that recognizes problems. They would learn to gather information in order to form justifiable opinions. They would explore alternative possibilities in an open-minded fashion; they would avoid jumping to conclusions. In such classrooms, students would engage in problem solving through analysis, discussion and compromise. And with all this, they would gain the information and skills necessary to meet state standards. State testing and disciplined inquiry are only mutually exclusive if we conceive of inquiry as somehow devoid of facts, or if we let the pressure of testing focus our teaching on merely hollow information. Effective social studies helps kids learn information and ideas. It is rigorous, whatever our critics might claim; it is aimed at understanding, deliberation, and in-depth thought.

Effective social studies classrooms are also caring places. I remember one particular class I had when I was a middle school teacher. The kids in that class simply didn't like one another very much. They didn't seem to mind me, and I really didn't have much trouble with them, as long as I didn't ask them to engage them in meaningful, and caring, interactions with one another. In fact, the class was less trouble if I didn't ask them to interact—that was asking for trouble. I remember saying to them one day, "If you learn nothing else this year but how to get along with people you don't like, I'll be happy." I immediately wanted to take back those words, by the way, as I imagined my students going home and telling their parents that their teacher doesn't care if they learn anything!

But I believed, and I still believe, that classrooms should be caring places. I believe that students and teachers should treat one another in respectful and compassionate ways. This too, is about civic virtue and coming to understand a concept of a "common good." I wanted my students to understand that sometimes one's personal needs are subsumed in those of the larger community. I wanted them to see that we are "all in this boat together." Caring classrooms are not conflict free; rather, conflict is dealt with openly and with respect for diverse points of view. Effective social studies classrooms develop a consciousness characterized by a sense of responsibility to others. We disagree—we don't ignore or destroy. Caring is at the core of democracy. One of the places young people can develop an expanded sense of self is in our classrooms. Students learn better when they feel safe and cared for. And students learn about democracy as they learn to care and nurture, as well as to resolve conflict.

By the way, I think I had some success with that group of students. At the end of that year the class planned and carried out a surprise party for me. It really was a surprise. They kept the secret and worked together to pull it off. One of them even said to me (in one of those highlight moments of teaching), "You really did make a difference for us."

Caring classrooms are a prerequisite for participatory classrooms. Participatory classrooms are characterized by shared decision-making and by cooperative, egalitarian relationships. In democratic classrooms, leadership should be exercised, but not coercion and manipulation. I've watched small children participate in determining how their classroom would be run: what would be the rules, rights and responsibilities. In effective social studies classrooms, students are helped to develop the skills and maturity to assume the responsibilities of decision-making. They engage in interactions with one another to make meaningful decisions that affect their lives in school. And they reach outside their classrooms, to engage with others in the school and community. They learn that participation must be informed, deliberative and caring.

A group of high school students in a classroom where I had a student teacher recently organized a debate for the candidates running for school board in that community. They invited the candidates, invited the community, handled all the logistics. I was in the classroom the next morning observing my student teacher de-briefing the experience. I've rarely seen students so engaged. They talked about how it all went, and also about what the candidates had said. These students were actively engaged, actively participating, in meaningful conversation about real issues. I was inspired.

Finally, democratic classrooms must be socially just places. Socially just schools and classrooms provide all learners with rigorous learning in caring classrooms. Many of the reforms of the past decade or two have been about bringing all children into the mainstream, about countering old structures that gave children differential access to learning experiences and good teachers. The construct of multiple intelligence conceives of intellectual capacity as complex and developmental, and learning as an active process. The slogan: "All children can learn" reminds us to provide the best education possible to all learners regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or score on a standardized test. However, we must be watchful against thinking that a slogan makes reality. A slogan such as "all children can learn" may make us feel as though we are providing a rigorous and meaningful education to all kids. But are we?

On another visit to a student teacher I observed students making presentations based on research they had done about the 1920s. Their projects were examples of "multiple intelligence" at its best. One group of students had organized a jazz combo (it was an arts magnet school). One young woman had baked toll house cookies. (Did you know toll house cookies were invented in the 1920s?) There was a poetry reading. Other kids described the political climate of the time; others focused on economics. These students built on their strengths to create a picture of the 1920s that was complex and fascinating. These were predominantly low-income, minority students in a failing school district. All children can learn what they want to learn. It's a daunting task to push resistant learners toward rigorous thinking, to engage indifferent children in thoughtful debate. But this must be the goal for social studies (and schooling generally) if we are to really address the public good.

As we struggle to teach in socially just ways, we must also engage our students in questions of social justice. Socially just classrooms give learners opportunities to examine the concept of social justice and the ways in which it is and is not played out in communities and nations. I remember one day—when I was still teaching middle school—my class came in after lunch and told me about a new boy in school. The new kid had cerebral palsy—he looked "funny," moved "funny" and drooled. Some kids at lunch had started teasing him. Other kids had gotten upset. "It's not right," one of my boys said. "Well," I said, "What can you do about it?" I decided, on the spur of the moment, that talking about "what's right" rather than the War of 1812, or whatever was on my lesson plan for the day, might be more meaningful. It was. We talked for a long time about why people who are "different" are often teased. We talked about who the teasers are. And we talked about the need not to remain silent when we witness such teasing. That was their solution, not mine. I didn't lecture them on proper behavior; they did it themselves. I didn't preach about standing up to ignorance—they decided that on their own. Perhaps the resistant and indifferent learners would be more engaged if they perceived the content of a lesson as meaningful, somehow connected to the worlds they know, and as something in which they participate.

I am not unaware of or indifferent to the structures and culture of schooling which make teaching for the public good—teaching in ways that are educative, caring, participatory and socially just—a difficult challenge. Social studies has been criticized for being without content, too focused on process. Nothing I've suggested above should indicate that content doesn't matter. Basic literacy is important. An understanding of the disciplines that contribute to social studies is crucial. But "creating effective citizens" means that we must take learners beyond mere information. We cannot let ourselves be stopped by state mandates and testing, though we should not disregard these. Spend a little time on teaching kids how to take a test; drill them on basic information every once in a while. But don't put aside efforts at powerful teaching and learning. Meaningful content will be remembered far better than that learned through drill and kill.

Years ago, I chose to be a teacher—because I loved history (although I had not liked it as a school subject), and because I enjoyed kids. But mostly, I wanted to make a difference. I still believe that what we do matters. What each of us does is important; what all of us can do, can make a difference.

In 1932, George Counts, an educator and activist, addressed an assembly of the National Council of Education. He spoke of the challenges of economic depression and sought to spur teachers to political action. In fact, he challenged teachers to be active citizens at a time when teachers were expected not to be politically active. Most of all, he challenged them to take charge of their curriculum and their classrooms.

> "To refuse to face the task of creating a vision of a future America immeasurably more just and noble and beautiful than the America of today is to evade the most crucial, difficult, and important educational task. . . . Only through such a legacy of spiritual values will our children be enabled to take their place in the world, be lifted out of the present morass of moral indifference, be liberated from the senseless struggle for material success, and be challenged to high endeavor and achievement."[4]

Moral indifference, material success . . . as we look back and look to the future, Counts' challenge from 1932 is still relevant. "Today's social studies: Creating effective citizens." This NCSS public relations slogan must be more than a slogan—and that is up to each of us. As we learn our lessons from the past, let us remember that the future is still possibility. Quoting Eleanor Roosevelt, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

## Notes

1. Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

2. *Ibid.*, 19.

3. Jeannie Oaks, Karen Hunter Quartz, Steve Ryan, and Martin Lipton, *Becoming Good American Schools: The Struggle for Civic Virtue in Education Reform* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

4. George S. Counts, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 51-52.

# III

# Commentary on the NCSS Presidential Addresses, 1970-2000

*Mark A. Previte*

The 1960s possessed all the indicators of continued change. Technological advances propelled the United States into an arms competition and space race with its Cold War nemesis the Soviet Union. The home front witnessed the premature extinction of the life of a young president. His successor summoned a "Great Society" to vanquish the social ills that the nation had been incapable of solving. Questions of injustice concerning a hot war raging on in Southeast Asia and a civil rights conflict at home were fragmenting the American populace into warring factions. This was a decade whose future was being determined by the bullet rather than the ballot. As the nation continued to search for its social and moral compass, school aged children were sitting in their classrooms wondering about the relevance of these events to their own lives.

The New Social Studies movement, weathering two generations of projects dedicated to taking social studies education to a new level, had already crested. Hawks and Sinclair, whose thinking was influenced by Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, desired to move students away from the separate disciplines that were established under the New Social Studies movement, to an interdisciplinary approach where topics and problems would be submitted to rigorous study under multiple disciplines. According to the authors:

> It is in this respect that we challenge social studies educators to initiate a "new paradigm" for schooling. We support disciplinary thinking, but we eschew the extent to which the disciplines have become ends in themselves, rather than tools for creating knowledge and skills for a humane existence.[1]

Academics were definitely encouraged through the curriculum materials of the 1960s but relevance to student interests was sacrificed. Hence, the authors found it imperative that an open curriculum structure along with relevant topics would achieve the necessary results. The concept of relevancy was a Progressive concept that found one particular voice in Lawrence Metcalf who suggested that content "would acquire more meaning if its relevance to current problems and issues were perceived by students."[2] Students and educators orchestrated the relevance movement as part of the student protest movement of the 1960s. The supporters of this movement argued for the following:

> 1) the individualization of instruction through such teaching methods as independent study and special projects; 2) the revision of existing courses and development of new ones on such topics of student concern as environmental protection, drug addiction, urban problems, and so on; 3) the provision of educational alternatives, such as electives, minicourses, and open classrooms, that allow more freedom and choice; 4) the extension of the curriculum beyond the school's walls through such innovations as work-study programs, credit for life experiences, off-campus courses, and external degree programs; and 5) the relaxation of academic standards and admission standards to schools and colleges.[3]

The field of social studies education was also experiencing its own upheaval. The profession lacked a cohesive identity. The 1960s witnessed a struggle between two competing philosophies: the proponents of a social science perspective where history would reign supreme as the locus of the curriculum and the supporters of a reflective, problems curriculum where at the hub would be located perennial issues and problems that society struggled to solve within the context of an integrated disciplinary perspective. The next decade would see the organization working to become a more professional organization.[4]

## What Direction For The Social Studies? 1970-1979

The end of one of the most turbulent decades in American history had a profound impact on Shirley Engle. His 1970 address identified two major concerns related to the development of students as good citizens. The first deals with the development of the concept of social studies that was coined by the 1916 Committee on Social Studies. The major theme of this passage addressed the comparison of the goals related to social science and social studies. Engle had suggested that "except as a noble purpose recognized and proclaimed by numerous committees and commissions on the social studies over the years, the Social Studies do not, in fact, exist today."[5] Engle doubted that the membership understood the difference between the social studies and the social sciences. The second portion speaks of the nature of the social studies through the following questions: What are we to take as given in the social studies enterprise? What does the citizen do? From what sources does the citizen get the beliefs that he sees in making practical decisions? How is formal education usefully related to the total learning process of the citizen? What are the parameters of a necessary and sufficient social studies program? It is from this foundation that Engle asked the membership to confront three problem areas that may continue to confound and confuse future social studies educators: 1) the joining of social studies courses into one entity, 2) combining social studies with other disciplines to help refine the beliefs of citizens, and 3) relating outside experiences to classroom experiences.

By 1971, social studies education continued its metamorphosis from the new Social Studies state to one of rational inquiry.[6] The new NCSS Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines that emerged that same year were to "serve as a baseline from which to move in even more creative directions beyond what most regard as modern and innovative."[7] One of those directions was to move from the accumulation of knowledge to social activism. The activism that had been unleashed during the heyday of the mid to late 1960s had not taken root in public school classrooms. Addressing the guidelines, John Jarolimek especially emphasized the fourth component, social participation. The 1960s was a time period represented by immense social activism concentrating on questions involving civil rights, women's rights and the Vietnam War. The time was fitting for social studies teachers to move beyond the teaching of knowledge and skills and into an activist-oriented education. Jarolimek affirmed to teachers that the history of social movements was marked by change created by the organization of individuals whose solitary goal was the commitment to create a better society for its people. Teaching conflict resolution skills, discussion issues, and role modeling non-violent participatory behavior will lead students "to become thoughtful, informed social critics, to participate in democratic processes, to be involved, to be activists, and to demonstrate a responsible concern for improving the system."[8]

In 1972, the NCSS Annual Convention was meeting in Boston under the theme "We Live in a Revolution: Is Social Studies With It?" A number of clinics that were being offered seemed to counter the traditional teaching of social studies: New Directions, Techniques and Materials for Confronting the Issues Facing Our Students' World, Racism in the White Ghetto: White Teacher/Suburban School/Institutional Racism, Using Inquiry in Social Studies, A Model for Inquiry and Post Inquiry Activity in Social Processes, Strategies for Teaching Law-Focused Materials in

Schools: An Alternative to Revolution, and Strategies for Valuing and Thinking.[9] Where Jarolimek's anxiousness over the shortage of social activism in America's students was apparent, Jean Fair viewed the social revolution of the 1960s and questioned the relevance of social studies in the schools. Change must take place before the nation determined that social studies had become ineffectual. American political and social culture possesses a strong foundation from which social studies professionals must begin to create new ways of teaching and living in society. Fair offered three suggestions to the members. First, clarify the definition of social studies education. Jarolimek's solitary focus on social participation and activism would be detrimental to students. Social participation together with the other three components, knowledge, abilities, and valuing, should be maintained in a harmonious equilibrium.[10] Secondly, all students must be exposed to social studies knowledge so they may learn to think critically and grow as critical citizens. Finally, social studies education will flourish if it exists in an environment that is open, free and accepting, and participatory. A supporter of the reflective approach to social studies, Fair envisioned student involvement in decision making in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and scheduling. Power distribution to the students would advance their involvement in authentic democracy.

Harris Dante continued to promote the idea of a reflective social studies, a position analogous to his predecessors Engle and Fair. Directing his message to methodology professors, Dante submitted that modest change had emerged in the direction of social studies education and reflective thinking. The fads and waves of curriculum and instructional changes should be replaced by a reflective, interdisciplinary approach. Qualified teachers, with a sufficient background in the social sciences, would embark on a five-year program increasing the standard of scholarship necessary to strengthen teacher professionalism. He also suggested that greater research in the schools would present to the profession a better understanding of common classroom practices necessary for the improvement of social studies instruction. Apparently, the influence on research was not only waning during the first half of the 1970s but for the remainder of the century.[11]

Stanley Wronski, a protégée of Edgar Wesley, declared that the innovative achievements of his year in office were overwhelmed by global catastrophe. The war between the Israelis and Egyptians and the concomitant near nuclear response between American and the Soviet Union, had turned the Middle East into a powder keg. The terrorist actions at the Munich Olympics just two short years before, OPEC finding its leverage against the United States and her allies by declaring an oil embargo, and the growing domestic scandal known as Watergate produced a crisis in confidence in our political system and our handling of foreign affairs. Wronski understood that social studies programs provided the nexus for teachers to prepare their present and future citizens with the understanding and critical judgment to create a framework for citizenship education. Just as Jean Fair fittingly demonstrated that social studies mattered, these crises presented an excellent opportunity to supporters and critics of the profession that social studies was a viable entity. It would fall upon the teachers to become the vanguard of the social studies movement in addressing such key issues as the integrity of the social studies, accountability, patriotism, ethnic studies, career education, values education, academic freedom, and the fallibility of our government system signifying to students that existing political, social and economic pathologies should be scrutinized and reflected upon.[12]

Criticism of the relevance of the social studies continued. Jean Claugus raised the spector of irrelevancy when she stated social studies might be an unidentifiable entity by the year 2000.[13] A past NCSS president sent her a letter avowing that the field of social studies was in a full-blown retreat.[14] Elementary schools were gradually replacing time for social studies instruction with reading and mathematics. Funding for social studies materials was slowly disappearing and criticism of the social studies continued unabated. Claugus offered that a fourth "R", Reality, be added to reading, writing and arithmetic. She encouraged the organization to elevate their collective awareness on five levels: professional organization, professional viability, citizenship education programs, quality social studies materials and flexible response.[15]

With the United States making preparations to celebrate its 200th anniversary, several "revolutions" were being remembered for their implications to American society. The American Revolution created the birth of a nation whose intent was to initiate a grand experiment in the democratic process. In the social studies, theoreticians and practitioners were reexamining the events of the New Social Studies revolution.[16] Simultaneously, another outspoken critic from within the social studies appeared. James Shaver from Utah State University spoke to the "mindlessness" that had infiltrated many different areas of the movement. First, teachers referred to themselves as "discipline" rather than social studies teachers. Second, Shaver agreed with Shirley Engle's nostrum that NCSS had become "a smorgasbord of educational goodies and services" for people of diverse interests rather than maintaining the goal of citizenship education.[17] Third, social studies teaching has been textbook driven, and academics and not educators have designed the materials developed for the classroom. In the

1960s, Shaver and Don Oliver developed New Social Studies Harvard Issues Project otherwise known as the jurisprudential approach.[18] Classrooms were taking on the appearance of academic competitions rather than reflective, decision-making arenas. Fourth, parental concerns on curriculum and instruction must be heard. They are "active, effective parts of the citizenship educator process."[19] Fifth, by striking out on the MACOS (Man: A Course of Study) controversy, NCSS was viewed as a second-rate player in the academic freedom movement. Finally, fads in social studies education must be avoided. Truth, rationality, decision-making and reflective thinking will remove the mindlessness and guide students and teachers to question their assumptions about social studies curriculum and instruction.

The second of three professors from Indiana University assumed the role of NCSS President in 1977. Howard Mehlinger, writing a letter to Thomas Jefferson, addressed three questions about the status of citizenship education and the roles schools have played in the development of their students as citizens. Do Americans still believe in the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence? Mehlinger stated that the rights of white people were protected through most of the history of the United States while minority groups, through the civil rights movement, began to receive greater attention during the midpoint of the 20th century. What do Americans think about their government? As the size of government and its involvement in the lives of citizens increased, a marked decline in public confidence was observed. Government can become so intrusive as it struggles to protect and defend the lives of its citizens that it crosses the line from individual freedom to government control. What is being done to prepare American youth to assume the role as responsible adult citizens? Mehlinger answered that society must prepare youth for their rightful place as citizens. Citizenship education should be the single purpose of schools even though support for this principle has experienced a roller coaster ride of support from the 1940s through the 1960s. For the success of social studies programs, Mehlinger emphasized three points. The conceptual framework of programs had to be developed and realized. The history of social studies has been littered with projects that possessed great potential but failed at the point of implementation due to a lack of understanding student psychological development as well as a deficiency in staff development training. He also suggested that teachers take the time to demonstrate to students the significance of understanding the perspective or vantage points of other individuals and groups. We will not completely understand our own arguments if we fail to consider and grasp the arguments and positions of others. Lastly, learning about citizenship is insufficient. Teachers should demonstrate that discussing issues, taking a position, writing letters to political leaders and newspapers and participating in political causes is the essence of citizenship.

Anna Ochoa was the third Indiana University professor to follow in the footsteps of Howard Mehlinger and Shirley Engle during the 1970s. The lack of concern by NCSS members over the issue of censorship deeply troubled Ochoa. Both conservative and liberal organizations were culpable of censoring materials for public consumption. If academic freedom was to be taken seriously, materials from both sides of the political spectrum must remain on the library shelves. The long arm of censorship had touched boards of education, publishing committees and especially teacher organizations. As evidence, Ochoa cited four cases involving teacher comments and/or classroom materials that were cited as inappropriate for students. Gathering information, securing professional guidelines, teacher participation in their contract negotiations, developing positive public relations with community members, developing sound philosophical arguments, wise decision making in selecting classroom materials, and permitting student voice in the selection of classroom materials were all sound solutions in the battle against censorship. NCSS contributed guidelines, publications, and workshops to inform and educate the membership but more needed to be accomplished. Ochoa suggested state organized Academic Freedom Organizations, a NCSS Hot Line, and an Academic Freedom Group composed of existing education groups and organizations whose agendas included academic freedom.

Professors continued to be elected to the most prestigious position in social studies while an eclectic mixture of themes and issues were found in the addresses of this decade. Eight professors of education and one social studies supervisor addressed their respective memberships during the 1970s. Seven of them hailed from the Midwest region of the nation while the remaining two represented the West; three of the presidents came from Indiana University where a reflective, issues-centered model of social studies was espoused. All were troubled with the conditions that existed in the public schools but very little was advanced about how the university classrooms would help solve these conditions. All were not satisfied with the course taken by the social studies. Some were apprehensive about the vagueness of the definition of the social studies; should it be viewed as a study of the individual disciplines or as an interdisciplinary approach using problems and issues as the focal point? Would one all encompassing definition tether together the various components that composed social studies education? Dougan had reported that social studies definitions had evolved through five different eras without any consensus.[20] Teachers were criticized for not doing enough to create active student citizens. None selected the demise of the New Social Studies as a major theme although a number of them referenced it in their remarks.

### Social Studies in a Conservative Era: 1980-1989

With the election of Ronald Reagan, the 1980s would mark a transition to a conservative philosophy that had not been seen in this country for a generation. The back to basics movement, business-oriented models of education, and a greater focus on academics would diametrically oppose what progressive educators and liberal Democrats had espoused for years as they grew up in the shadow of Franklin Roosevelt and the influences of the New Deal philosophy.

Spurred on by the reports published during the 1980s that criticized the country's educational system, the nation's politicians, media and citizens demanded appropriate action to stem the perceived tide of mediocrity in the American educational system.[21] This firestorm of criticism concluded that the economic, political, and cultural implications of American students falling behind their foreign counterparts would take the United States down the road to ruin from which it might never recover. These experts proposed solutions that would reinforce student attainment and understanding of factual knowledge, which in essence, evoked the process of dominant culture transmission.[22]

With the New Social Studies and values clarification movements now chronicled as ineffective fads, Todd Clark would call to mind the days of a more traditional pedagogy of examining the contributions of individuals. Using his father as a role model, Clark longed for the day when the hero was held up to students as a role model befitting their admiration and emulation. He was responding to the relevance movement and mini courses of the 1970s where past NCSS presidents emboldened their followers with the message of studying the issues and decisions. Clark was worried that teachers were overemphasizing the role played by institutions and organizations that governed the lives of its citizens. Neglecting the contributions and decisions made by the individual, from the celebrated to the unfamiliar, would be considered a disservice to the student. How did people deal with the issues? What solutions did they generate? What values did they hold so dear that influenced their decisions? Their stories, the individual successes and failures, were integrated into the fabric of the national narrative and they should be included in social studies education.

A recurring theme of the previous decade would return in Theodore Kaltsounis' address: as the social studies community continued to absorb attacks and criticism, NCSS had to unconditionally support its teachers on the front lines of citizenship education. He would admit, a first for an NCSS President, that the membership included a number of incompetent teachers. But this speech was not intended to convey a downbeat message. His unique perspective was shaped by his adolescent years growing up in communist-controlled Albania. This set in motion an initiative that beckoned for the protection and well-being of children. As an observer and participant of educational indoctrination in Albanian schools, Kaltsounis believed Americans lacked the perspective to comprehend the impact of military conflict on children. Calling for a renaissance in social studies, Kaltsounis offered three solutions that centered on the principle that social studies teachers are "the key guardians of our system."[23] First, there should be a strong realization and commitment to the mission of teachers. Recalling the words of James Shaver, mistakes have been made; too many fads led to little growth in citizenship. Teachers were being expected to become amateur psychologists without the proper training. Second, professionalization had to be amplified. Discussion between teachers had to be advanced to a higher level of professional awareness, and better screening methods for new candidates should have been developed. Finally, schools of education had to achieve equilibrium between theory and practice in their student teachers. An abundance of novice teachers lacked concern or were under prepared in the theoretical foundations. These identical criticisms were addressed in a National Science Foundation study commissioned in 1976 to evaluate social studies classrooms. Their conclusions were the following:

1. The teacher is the key to what social studies will be for any student.
2. The materials from the federally-funded New Social Studies projects from the 1960s and 1970s are not being selected for classroom use.
3. The dominant instructional tool continues to be the conventional textbook, and longtime big sellers continue to dominate the market.
4. The curriculum is mostly history and government, with geography included at the elementary and middle/junior high levels. There is little inter-disciplinary teaching and little attention to societal issues.
5. The dominant modes of instruction continue to be large groups and teacher-controlled recitation and lecture, all based primarily on the textbook.
6. The 'knowing' expected for students is largely information-oriented. For students to demonstrate learning acceptably in discussion and on tests, they often have to reproduce not only the content but the language of the text....

7. Teachers tend to rely on external motivation. Students are not expected to learn because of their own interests, but for grades, for approval, because doing one's lessons is the thing that is done at school.
8. Students generally find social studies content and modes of instruction uninteresting....[24]

Howard Mehlinger, a past president of NCSS, addressed part of the problem for this lack of success in social studies. He hypothesized that the deplorable condition of social studies education was due in part to the widening gulf between public school teachers and university professors. College professors enjoy debating this issue through articles and speeches and assert that little progress can be expected in social studies until teachers address this issue. But for high school world history teachers, the definition of social studies is not a major concern—or even a minor one. For them, social studies has been effectively defined as what is found in the world history textbook. Many problems surround the teaching of world history to fifteen-year-old students: how to make the course interesting, how to handle a wide range of academic abilities within a single class, how to vary instructional practice, how to devise challenging examinations that can be scored swiftly, and so on. Very few social studies leaders are concerned with these problems. Indeed, such problems are generally considered to be too trivial to occupy the attention of the leaders.[25]

Can schools solve student-involved conflicts that originate and are influenced by cultural communities? Can schools negotiate compromises between the competing values of home, school and community? Can students maintain allegiance between their American heritage and their other cultural identities? The American Dream has been the great magnet that has attracted millions of immigrants because of its political, economic, social and religious possibilities. Not all of them have enjoyed the rewards they justly toiled for. Responding to the diverse nature of this country and the conflicts that emanated from it, James Banks considered how the socialization of American youth was influenced by race, gender, religion, ethnicity, and region.[26] Cultural communities created a deep and lasting influence on youth socialization. Assimilation into American society has usually forced the primary culture into the background. Periodically, these cultures can and do enter into conflict. Banks argued for a social studies curriculum that strikes a balance among the values of student cultures, their American identity, and their global citizenship. According to Banks, building upon the contributions of each culture would ideally create citizens that are more effective.

During the early 1980s, the United States was already well established as an informational society. Naisbitt reported that in 1950 only 17 percent of the workforce held information-related jobs, but by 1984, the figure was over 65 percent.[27] Preparing students to adapt to life in this kind of society presupposed the retooling of the nation's educational system. Carole Hahn continued to herald the call for a redefinition of citizenship education by the way of a critical, reflective social studies program. The current classroom environment calls for a transmission of knowledge dependent upon teacher lecture, indoctrination, a reliance on textbooks, and the memorization of facts. Hahn reiterated that wisdom is not gained from knowing but utilizing and reflecting upon the given information.[28] Building on Banks' multiculturalist theme, Hahn's redefinition of citizenship education included students perceiving themselves as local, national and global citizens and teachers avoiding the right answer syndrome and substituting that with a social studies based on reflective thinking and decision making.

The last time a K-12 teacher addressed the membership was in 1975 when Jean Claugus spoke to the reality of the profession.[29] Jean Craven, a district coordinator of social studies from New Mexico, thought it prudent to address the point of view of the classroom teacher from data collected in a study of the Albuquerque Public School for the 1983-1984 academic year. The goal most cherished by the district was that of citizenship transmission; including the teaching of history, values, institutions, cultures and controversial issues.[30] The study's findings indicated nothing unusual about social studies education. Teachers were only aware of what was occurring within their own domain rather than an awareness of the entire K-12 program. Elementary teachers stated that they used minimal time for social studies. Textbooks, usually the only source available to students, were relied upon as a source of information and not as the definitive source. Lecture and discussion were the primary teaching methods that supported the goal of teaching facts and concepts but if given a perfect setting, teachers would use creative types of pedagogy that supported higher order thinking skills. There was support for a history-centered K-12 curriculum with other social studies disciplines playing a secondary role.[31] Teachers were also doing good social studies work in their classrooms that left positive impressions on their students. Finally, community support for social studies had inched along further than the professionals realize.

Donald Bragaw's presidential address for 1985 declared that the passive nature of social studies professionals left them out of the decision making process of their profession. Bragaw criticized the all-encompassing nature of the social studies and NCSS; this created a lack of concentration in the organization and in the classroom. Special interests have fragmented NCSS and social studies to the point where the movement's vision has vanished. Assessment organizations with the backing from conservative groups also wanted their piece of the social studies pie by testing for factual knowledge and cultural literacy. Politicians, education agencies, the media and social studies organizations have diverted social studies onto highways that have scattered educators into different directions, but Bragaw insisted that all was not lost. Programs of Excellence would identify teachers and programs that elevated social studies curriculum and instruction. A taskforce would report the current status of textbooks and suggest recommendations for the future. A National Commission for the Social Studies, that would generate the report *Charting A Course*, was organized to reestablish the goals of social studies.[32] Finally, a call was sent out for members to design a K-12 scope and sequence for social studies. The last two recommendations would reverberate throughout NCSS continuing the debate on a discipline vs. interdisciplinary orientation.

What can Americans learn from their foreign counterparts about moral education? Paul Shires returned to the problem of student morals based on his observations from several overseas educational excursions. The agents of socialization in these nations, including family, church, and community, imparted a stronger influence on their children, but these nations continued to suffer numerous social ills. He believed that teaching morals and modeling moral behavior was part of the purview of social studies curriculum. Shires believed that heroes and role models, as Todd Clark mentioned in 1980, demonstrated wonderful values and behaviors. Utilizing the materials developed by Kohlberg and issues-centered educators[33] together with involving students in real life activities would increase the probability of teenagers learning and acting on moral dilemmas appropriately.

Would high school graduates at the turn of the new century be prepared to confront a more complex world? Jan Tucker surmised that social studies was headed in the right direction with the continuing work of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, the variety of viewpoints represented at the sessions in the Dallas convention, the establishment of the first international social studies convention in Vancouver, British Columbia, and the development of the Task Force on the Recruitment and Participation of Ethnic Minorities in the National Council and the profession. Tucker was thrilled with the pronouncements by conservative politicians that a social studies curriculum should emphasize global themes. This could reverse the noncommittal attitude of those who had a stake in education. Criticizing the popular cultural literacy movement and its thesis that students should be greatly immersed in the knowledge of one's culture, Tucker complained that this trend would shortchange students' comprehension of the interrelatedness of world affairs with their individual lives. Accordingly, the world had moved from a territorial or militaristic mindset to a trading or economically interdependent pattern.[34] According to Tucker, it would behoove the teachers of social studies and professors of education preparing social studies teachers to develop courses and materials that will develop a global mindscape for their students.

During the second half of the 1980s, conservative educators and politicians advanced the argument for a social studies curriculum that centered on the study of history with a secondary role being played by geography, economics and civics/government. From this ideological position, Donald Schneider reflected upon the history of the social studies movement with its turf battles over the definition of social studies as a field constructed of individual disciplines, a unitary field tied together by selected themes and issues, a multidisciplinary field emphasizing the structure of the disciplines and a field of study focusing on student socialization.[35] The field was fragmenting over the roles of important knowledge, specialization, and the growth of special interests, but Schneider offered hope in the form of a number of ongoing projects that could move social studies into a new direction: the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Project 2061, CIVITAS, *Charting a Course* from The National Commission on Social Studies, and the NCSS scope and sequence selection process. Schneider provided the historical and philosophical questions, but it would be left to those who would follow to discover the precise blending that would create consensus in the field.

If citizenship is the core of social studies, then those involved in the preparing of the nation's young citizens should look to the beginning of the new decade with renewed hope. Mary McFarland asserted that the future status of social studies and citizenship education would be determined by the passionate commitment of its teachers. Once again, another president appealed to her colleagues to take stock of the critical responsibility of developing citizens of the future through the application of the vast amount of resources and exciting, controversial and relevant events that are the grist of debate and discussion. According to McFarland, developing student voice through the auspices of the social studies would develop an excitement about actively assuming the office of citizen. Teachers, as curriculum gatekeepers, possessed the power of developing this voice by deciding what knowledge should be taught in the classroom.[36] Developing "citizen vision" was to be accomplished by the discussion of issues from multiple vantage points and illustrating these viewpoints through the use of role models from diverse occupations. "Citizen vitality" contributed to the persistent attitude that there exist many ways to contribute to the betterment of humanity. Giving a preview of her contribution to the NCSS Curriculum Standards that would be published in three years, McFarland concluded her address by reminding social studies teachers that their solemn responsibility was to assist students in viewing the world through the interdisciplinary lenses of the social studies.

Paralleling the diversity of interests that has been a hallmark of NCSS, the presidents continued to address a variety of themes and ideas in their addresses. With the conservative ideology dominating the discussion in the reform movement of education, the presidents of NCSS during this decade continued debating a number of different issues that would optimistically lead to progress in student learning and advancement in the teaching profession. The backgrounds of the presidents were widely distributed: five university professors, two coordinators, one teacher and one organization director. A diversity of issues, many of them familiar ones, dotted the social studies landscape as the leadership conveyed their individual perspectives on the state of the union of the social studies. The study of individuals, multiculturalism, global citizenship, the definition of the social studies, a discipline centered vs. an interdisciplinary approach, moral education, the division between teachers and professors, and participatory citizenship all received their proper voice. Each asked the respective audiences to perform a self-evaluation of his/her curriculum programs and instructional strategies based on their vision of social studies. Paradoxically, their collective voices continued to ring out for their own special interests while at the same time criticizing their own organization over this identical deficiency. Unity of voice was not one of the strong points of the addresses; the same was true for the organization. On the other hand, teaching the content and processes of the social studies is necessary to making decisions in a society that is known for its political, economic, and social diversity.

## Social Studies for the 21st Century: 1990-2000

The contentious relationship between the supporters of the disciplines and the proponents of the social studies, over the ongoing debate of the National Council for the Social Studies Task Force on Scope and Sequence whose charge it was to select a scope and sequence for the K-12 curriculum in social studies, continued into the next decade.[37] For all the brouhaha unleashed by the models that were selected and rejected, Fred Risinger returned to the theme of the two disparate cultures: the university types and classroom teachers whose agendas conflict over the theory and practice of social studies.[38] But after further review of the documents and articles written about the scope and sequence process, the conclusion reached was that the social studies possessed more commonalities than were thought possible. The social studies, according to Risinger, must combine the goals of our society with the knowledge and skills of the social studies to make the lives of students meaningful.[39] The acceptance of global education and the study of religious issues into mainstream social studies curriculum demonstrated flexibility and the acceptance of change. It was Risinger's hope that other promises such as increased student participation and community service would be fulfilled in the future.

Margit McGuire's prelude of her vision for the future of the social studies confirmed a consciousness of pessimism of which the implications appeared dire for social studies as well as the nation. McGuire envisaged by the year 2010 an America whose two-class society would be "on the brink of anarchy."[40] Based on evidence from Jonathon Kozol's book *Savage Inequalities*, criticisms of the revisionist history of the Columbus Quincentenary, and the condemnation of multicultural education and ideological battle over political correctness, political and educational conservatives were gaining strength and influence in the public media. McGuire implored teachers to demonstrate that social studies content and skills develop a critical consciousness in students. She also attached the proposal that NCSS should play major roles in the development of assessments and standards. The implication was that the academic and psychological development of all children is vital to the success of the American experiment.

Relying upon her expertise in global education, Charlotte Anderson linked two contentious documents of the NCSS, the Columbian Quincentenary statement and the Definition of the Social Studies, to justify the progressive conception for civic education within a democratic society. Replacing the Cold War mentality with a model of cultural diversity and interdependence signaled a new educational era. The global population movement in conjunction with technological progress created economic, political and social achievements and injustices for American citizens. Educational accountability for students and communities is achievable if equilibrium is acquired between economic and civic expansion, greater political support for public over private schools is attained, multicultural education is bequeathed a considerable voice within the social studies community, and social studies articulates its purpose with a unified voice.[41]

As a high school teacher with 23 years experience, Denny Schillings was eminently qualified to enter into a discourse related to his experiences.

No argument can be submitted opposing the thesis that teachers occupy a critical role in the development of young people particularly in their understanding of the human condition. Opting against transforming students into mini disciplinarians, an idea inherent in the New Social Studies movement, Schillings supported the social studies goal of creating "caring, informed, and participating human beings and citizens."[42] A broad array of curriculum materials and informational delivery systems would be regarded merely as the means to aid the teacher in his/her quest to shape student thinking. Linking student experience to course content promotes student comprehension. Using the retirement of Michael Jordan from professional basketball is a case in point. Young people around the world were shocked and concerned about the ramifications of this event. It was definitely a teachable moment that encouraged educators to employ the ten themes of the NCSS curriculum standards. Understanding the consequences of this episode led to the endorsement of an interdisciplinary approach.

Robert Stahl's pessimistic introduction continued a theme comparable to earlier presidents. He proposed that significant academic success would lead to positive life experiences for students. For this to happen, teachers would have to reeducate themselves on the ways and means to create a successful classroom atmosphere through an information-constructivist model of learning. Stahl suggested that students will succeed when curriculum and instruction are communicated in language that is precise; when cognitive principles of inventing, learning and thinking are integrated into the classroom atmosphere; and when informational, processing, and time needs are met.

Just as immigrants are assimilated into the American society and its culture, Michael Hartoonian believed that teachers and students must also be prepared themselves to be assimilated into a fresh American identity, replacing the previous model that was forged by the World War II generation. The shaping of this generation's values paid an exacting price on the nation whereby parents, schools, and community have adopted a minimalist philosophy about teaching citizenship to its children. Consequently, aesthetic virtues and values received very little attention. The paradigm shift that should replace the World War II model endorses love, reason and logic, equality, justice, creativity, and humanitarianism.

Tedd Levy, a middle school teacher from Connecticut, continued the Hartoonian theme of compassion and kindness toward others. As has been the tradition of American education since the days of Sputnik and the Cold War, Levy correctly pointed out that science and mathematics have received more than enough attention while social studies has been considered an "also ran." He also stipulated that the downturn in community civic life adversely affected life in the schools. For this reason, he said any attempts at school reform will fail unless the problems facing the community and the family are resolved. Social studies was also being threatened by the assault on public education by private school supporters. Until these situations have been remedied, Levy suggested that the responsibility for the nation's students has been squarely placed on the shoulders of social studies teachers.

The window of opportunity for change in social studies education was never more apparent. Richard Theisen harkened back to the creative and innovative days of the 1960s and speculated whether the social studies community could recreate the powerful programs from that era for a new generation of teachers who were short on experience but long on enthusiasm and inspiration. He was confident that the current veterans would lead the way to precipitate changes in certification, school structure, student assessment, and curriculum and staff development in laying a more stable foundation for the newly anointed. Theisen's referencing the philosophies and curriculum work of John Dewey, Harold Rugg, Hilda Taba, and James Shaver was an indication that this president was asking teachers to consider the advantages of an issues-centered approach. Furthermore, teachers should expand their own materials as a substitute for the textbook as the primary classroom source. Finally, Theisen encouraged classroom teachers to consider leadership roles in community life and in their state and national social studies organization to effect change on the course of social studies education.

A successful social studies program should exhibit the qualities of caring, communication and democratic education according to Susan Adler. Responding to her memories of student life, an element of the school's contribution to the democratic process was to balance the curriculum between the district requirements and the desires of the student. Space to vocalize student concerns and problems about their lives inside and outside of the school leads to opportunities for decision-making. These opportunities allow them to experience the essence of democratic behavior dialoguing with each other about common interests and weaving a stronger social fabric in the community. Together with a classroom environment that encouraged critical thinking, social justice and decision-making, Adler's hope was that this beginning set of experiences would continue as these teenagers would take their places as adult citizens in communities where they would discuss problems, share experiences and create democratic spheres of influence.

Each of the presidents of the final decade of the 20th century maintained his/her attention on whether current practices in social studies curriculum and instruction would be sufficient in preparing students to wrestle with the issues and problems of the new century. The opening of the decade witnessed a continuation of a two-pronged debate over control of the definition of the social studies between the theorists and the practitioners and the interpretation and implementation of the NCSS standards. Risinger coaxed the membership to set aside its theoretical arguments and turf battles and focus on the real issue of improving social studies teaching. McGuire, Anderson, Stahl, and Adler steadily increased the emphasis on the standards and speculated their future impact through their individual visions of civic efficacy, global interdependence, and academic success and civic engagement respectively. The next two speeches of Hartoonian and Levy de-emphasized the standards theme and argued for a social studies steeped in humanitarian values. The three public school teachers, Schillings, Levy and Theisen, remained committed to solving the problems relevant to the daily lives of teachers.

The social studies has lived a long albeit a disquieting life. Overlapping obstacles have impeded attempts at progress. Controversy has scarred the movement and attempts have been made to silence it altogether.[43] The members of this select group of individuals each created a vision through which educators would empower their students by instructing them about the theory of democracy and the rationale of citizenship. Each was determined to make his/her term in office more distinctive than any of the previous administrations. They generated enthusiasm for the profession and the organization demonstrating how both can benefit the classroom teacher and their students. Many of them were probably disappointed by the unwillingness of the membership to take their advise to heart. Surely, they wondered if anyone was listening. But they could take comfort in knowing that each had the opportunity to create educational change. The words of a former NCSS president would ring true in describing their role:

> By electing him to his office you have given him an opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the organization; to shape, at least in part, some of its policies; to share in the discovery and advancement of new talent; to serve as a representative of thousands of social studies teachers at various gatherings; and to reflect upon social education, the effectiveness of the National Council for the Social Studies, and the directions in which both appear to be traveling.[44]

## Notes

1. Glenn W. Hawkes and Robert L. Sinclair, "Not to Be: One Direction for Social Studies Educators," *The Social Studies Professional* 17 (January 1972), 2.

2. Lawrence E. Metcalf, "Some Guidelines for Changing Social Studies Education," *Social Education* 27 (April 1963), 198.

3. Allan C. Ornstein and Francis P. Hunkins, *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles, and Issues* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), 39.

4. William G. Wraga, "Struggling Toward Professionalization: 1968-1982." *Social Education* 59 (November/December 1995), 429-437.

5. Shirley H. Engle, "Exploring the Meaning of the Social Studies," *Social Education* 35 (March 1971), 287.

6. Alberta Macke Dougan, "The Search For A Definition of The Social Studies: A Historical Case," *The International Journal of Social Education* 3 (Winter 1988-89), 23.

7. NCSS Task Force on Curriculum Guidelines, "Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines," *Social Education* (December 1971), 854.

8. John Jarolimek, "Concerning the Matter of Activism in Social Studies Education," *Social Education* 36 (February 1972), 155.

9. "NCSS Annual Meeting in Boston," *The Social Studies Professional* 20 (September 1972), 1.

10. Fair's position on the definitions of the social studies would persist through the remainder of the decade. See "Comments of Jean Fair" in Robert D. Barr, James L. Barth and Samuel Shermis, *Defining the Social Studies* (Arlington, VA: National Council for the Social Studies, 1977), 106-109.

11. James P. Shaver, "The Future of Research on Social Studies—For What Purpose?" In *Critical Issues in Social Studies Research*, ed. William B. Stanley (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2001), 231.

12. Stanley Wronski, "A Social Studies Manifesto," *Social Education* 39 (March 1975), 151-152.

13. Jean Tilford Claugus, "The Fourth 'R,'" *Social Education* 40 (March 1976), 151.

14. Ibid., 150.

15. Ibid., 151-152.

16. Gerald W. Marker, "Social Studies: What Happened On The Way To The Revolution?" *Indiana Social Studies Quarterly* 29 (1976), 5-13.

17. Shirley H. Engle, "The Future of Social Studies Education and NCSS," *Social Education* 34 (1970), 780.

18. Donald W. Oliver and James P. Shaver, *Teaching Public Issues in the High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966).

19. James P. Shaver, "A Critical View of the Social Studies Profession," *Social Education* 41 (April 1977), 304.

20. Alberta Macke Dougan, "The Search For a Definition of the Social Studies: A Historical Case," *The International Journal of Social Education* 3 (Winter 1988-89), 13-36. Dougan identified these eras as follows: Historians and the Birth of the Social Studies, 1875-1925; The Social Studies Movement, 1925-1940; Patriotism to the Forefront, 1940-1960; The New Social Studies, 1960-1975; and Rational Citizenship, 1975-Present.

21. The National Commission on Excellence in Education, *Meeting the Challenge of a Nation at Risk* (Cambridge, MA: USA Research, 1984).

22. Mortimer J. Adler, *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1982); E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987); Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987); Lynne V. Cheney, *American Memory: A Report on the Humanities in the Nation's Public Schools* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities).

23. Theodore Kaltsounis, "Renaissance in Social Studies: A Challenge and a Responsibility," *Social Education* 46 (March 1982), 203.

24. James P. Shaver, O. L. Davis, Jr., and Suzanne W. Helburn, "The Status of Social Studies Education: Impressions from Three NSF Studies," *Social Education* 43 (February 1979), 151.

25. Howard D. Mehlinger, "Social Studies: Some Gulfs and Priorities," in *The Social Studies: Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, ed. Howard D. Mehlinger and O. L. Davis, Jr., (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 253. Larry Cuban, "History of Teaching in Social Studies," in *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning*, ed. James P. Shaver (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 204. Cuban concluded that during the last sixty years the social studies classroom has been dominated by teacher-centered instruction that includes the following activities: lecture, textbook utilization as the solitary source, discussion, tests, and seat-work. James S. Leming, "The Two Cultures of Social Education," *Social Education* 53 (October 1989), 404-408.

26. James A. Banks, "Cultural Democracy, Citizenship Education, and The American Dream." *Social Education* 47 (March 1983), 232.

27. John Naisbett, *Megatrends* (New York: Warner Books, 1984), 4.

28. Carole Hahn, "Promise and Paradox: Challenges to Global Citizenship," *Social Education* 48 (April 1984), 241.

29. George Watson, Jr. was the last teacher to hold the NCSS Presidency in 1979, but he did not address the convention.

30. Jean Craven, "A View From the Classroom," *Social Education* 49 (April 1985), 331.

31. Ibid., 344.

32. National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, *Charting a Course: Social Studies for the 21st Century*. (United States of America: National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, 1989).

33. Maurice P. Hunt and Lawrence E. Metcalf, *Teaching High School Social Studies* 2nd ed., (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Donald W. Oliver and James P. Shaver, *Teaching Public Issues in the High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966).

34. Jan L. Tucker, "Social Studies For The 21st Century," *Social Education* 51 (March 1987), 211-213.

35. Donald O. Schneider, "History, Social Sciences, and the Social Studies," *Social Education* 53 (March 1989), 148.

36. Steven J. Thornton, "Teacher As Curricular-Instructional Gatekeeper in Social Studies," in James P. Shaver (ed.) *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning* (MacMillan Publishing Company: New York, 1991), 237-248.

37. There were six models submitted for review. Thomas L. Dynneson and Richard E. Gross, "A Century of Encounter," *Social Education* 50 (November/December 1986), 486-488; H. Michael Hartoonian and Margaret A. Laughlin, "Designing a Scope and Sequence," *Social Education* 50 (November/December 1986), 502-512; Shirley H. Engle and Anna S. Ochoa, "A Curriculum for Democratic Citizenship," *Social Education* 50 (November/December 1986), 514-525; William B. Stanley and Jack L. Nelson, "Social Education for Social Transformation," *Social Education* 50 (November/December 1986), 528-534; Willard M. Kniep, "Social Studies Within A Global Education," *Social Education* 50 (November/December 1986), 536-542.

38. James S. Leming, "The Two Cultures of Social Studies Education," *Social Education* 53 (October 1989), 404-408.

39. C. Frederick Risinger, "Unkept Promises and New Opportunities: Social Studies Education and the New World Order," *Social Education* 55 (February 1991), 140.

40. Margit E. McGuire, "Whose Voices Will Be Heard? Creating a Vision for the Future," *Social Education* 56 (February 1992), 129.

41. Charlotte C. Anderson, "The Context of Civic Competence and Education Five Hundred Years After Columbus," *Social Education* 57 (April/May 1993), 162.

42. Denny Schillings, "Teaching the Human Condition Through the Social Studies," *Social Education* 58 (April/May 1994) 197.

43. Jack L. Nelson, "Premature Announcement of the Death of Social Studies." Paper presented to the College and University Faculty Assembly, National Council for the Social Studies annual meeting, Detroit, MI: (November 20, 1992), 14-15.

44. John Haefner, "Candid Observations: Remarks by the President," *Social Education* 18 (February 1954), 52.

This publication of the NCSS presidential addresses makes these primary sources in social studies education readily accessible to various users, including historians, teachers, students, and interested members of the general public. Readers are likely to be stimulated, enlightened, provoked, and even amused by various parts of this collection of papers, which provide a valuable window to the past of the NCSS and the field of social studies.

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